Tales of Real Life: Lady Anne and Lady Jane

Amelia (Alderson) Opie

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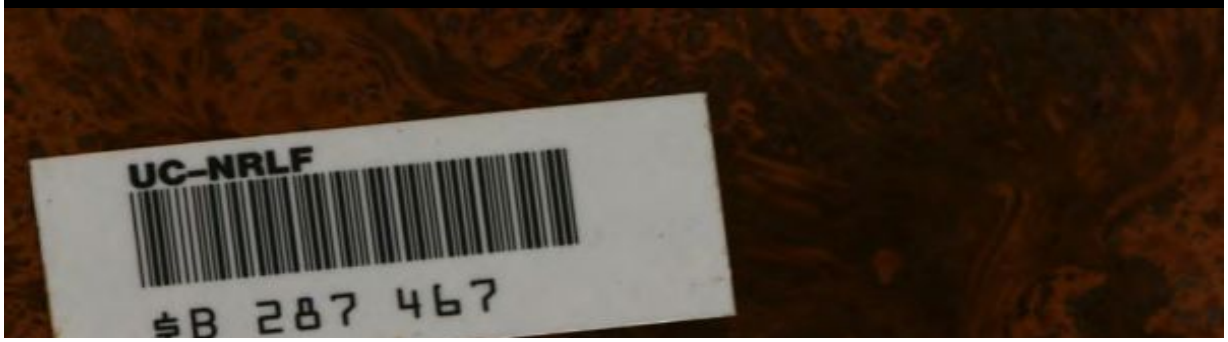

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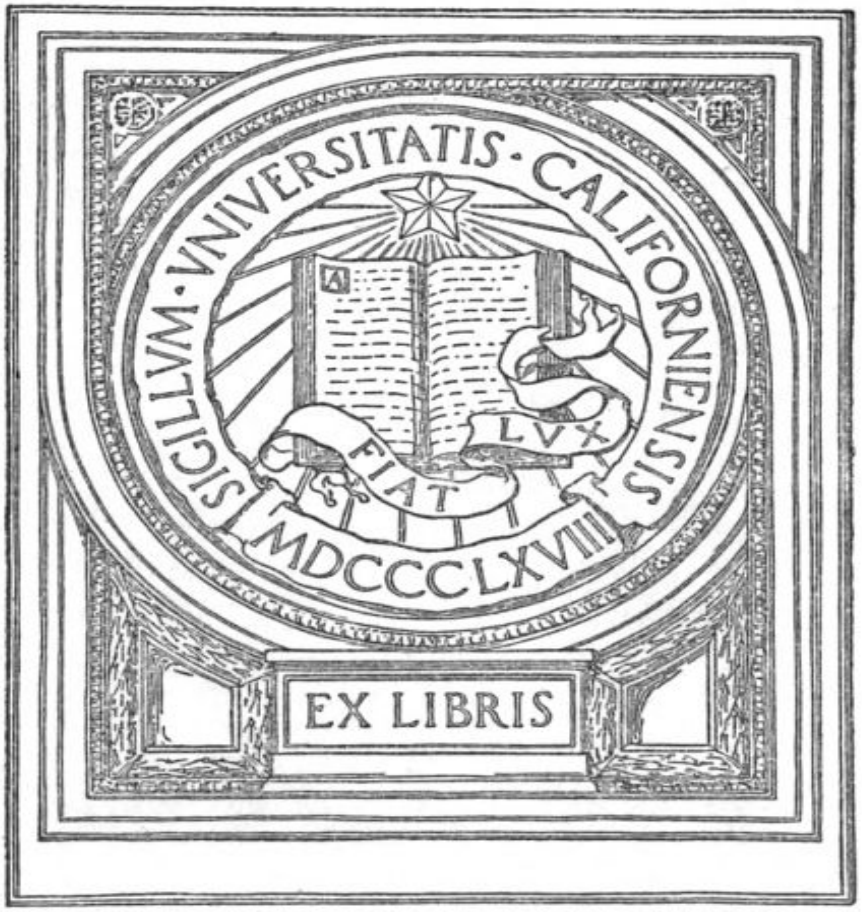
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TALES

OF

REAL LIFE.

BY

MRS. OPIE.

TALES

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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V,) LADY ANNE Aw> LADY JANE.

A TALE.

WELL, Harry," said Mr. Percy to his son, " which of my fair and noble wards am I to call daughter ? You have been seemingly a long time suspended like Mahomet's tomb between two magnets."

" Alas for Mahomet's tomb, my dear father, if it be not more equally balanced than my affections."

" Then what think you of another simile—a child that is undecided whether to choose a peach or a nectarine ?"

" No—that will not doj because the child has probably his choice of either, and I have not mine of the ladies in question."

VOL. I. B " But

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" But I think you *may* have.—Lady Anne Mortimer is a grand lovely creature! what bright dark eyes she has 1"

" Yes,—and what fascinating eyes, colour unknown, has Lady Jane Langleyl I am sure I know *oot* whether they be gray, blue, or hazel,—but by turns I believe they are all three,—and like a changeable silk, they are beautiful to the sight without one's being able to tell what is the predominant hue."

" Eyes like changeable silk, Harry f Humph! I hope you do not extend the simile to her Ladyship's temper?"

" To her humour I do, and like her the better for it—

■ From grave to gay, from lively to severe.' "

" That may be a recommendation to a mistress, Harry, but surely not to a wife.— Bright.coloured silks, to borrow your metaphor in part, are not good for every day wear ; one of a more sober and *even*

colour colour would do better. Lady Anne is the , woman for a wife*;* she is not so dazzling as her cousin, but I think her more estimable—nay, she has

more beauty also, for she has certainly better features."

" Better features, sir! So she has, I dare say, according to measurement: but there is one thing which Lady Jane has, which her cousin wants, and without which a beauty is almost plain, and with which a plain woman is almost beautiful— and that is *charm,* or, as the French call it, *agrement*.— It is what Women feel in *our* sex, but cannot understand in their *own ;* and when they. see us admire a woman in whom they can discover no personal attraction, they begin measuring her nose and her mouth, and criticizing the colour of her eyes, and hair, and complexion, till they end with * In short, *1* call her plain, and think it is madness in men to admire her.' And to this gift called f charm,' ~fj» ■ B 2 and and which I believe to have been Psyche's celebrated box of beauty, Lady Jane adds handsome if net regular features, and a form, a complexion "

" By no means as fine as Lady Anne's."

" Why, perhaps not; for sometimes she's pale, and sometimes red ; and Lady Anne's colour is permanent and unvarying."

" Unvarying, Harry! when her bloom is every moment deepened by the blush of feeling and modesty—while her tall figure and majestic carriage inspire respect as well as admiration."

" There again, sir—it is that very height, that very majesty that I do not admire.—Not but that Lady Jane *can* be majestic too—but she had rather *please* than *awe ;* rather *attract* than *repel."*

" Lady Jane majestic ! By the side of Lady Anne she is rather short than other

wise."

" Short

** Short by the side of Lady Anne! to be sure she is—an acacia by the side of a Lombardy poplar! Lady Anne is

* Tall and as straight as a poplar tree,
And her cheeks are as red as a rose :'

but she wants *grace,*—and so does a poplar. There's Lady Jane throwing her lovely per. on into a thousand graceful attitudes like a bending woodbine, while her cousin sits in one posture like a cedar of Lebanon. Lady Jane is a beautiful running accompaniment, while Lady Anne is four minims in a bar. Besides, Lady Anne often speaks disagreeable truths, and Lady Jane none but agreeable ones."

" In short, my dear son, you are in love with Lady Jane, and to a man in love there is only one beautiful woman in the world."

" There you wrong me, sir,—I think Lady Anne very handsome, and I adore her virtues; and if she would but condescend scend to be *agreeable,* she would be irresistible."

" Well, well, I see all hope for her is over, and I am sorry for it;—for I fear that you like Lady Jane, and Lady Anne likes you."

" I hope not. But, sir, don't you think Lady Jane loves me a *little f"*

" I can't tell—for that ' *charm,'* as you call it, throws such a bright halo round her, that I have as yet been unable to see her clearly enough to discern what her real feelings are.—However, as my first wish is to see you happy, and as you can only be so with the woman of your heart, I will watch Lady Jane. I should have preferred Lady Ar.ne. Besides, she has a great fortune, and her cousin comparatively a small one. But you have wealth enough, and more than enough with your late uncle's, in possession, and mine in prospect: therefore you can please

yourself yourself without violating the dictates of worldly prudence; and I hope I shall live at least to see you married."

" I hope you will live," said Harry Percy affectionately, " to see me and my children married, dear sir." Then seeing Lady Jane and Lady Anne in the garden, he eagerly ran to meet them.

It would indeed have been more for Harry Percy's interest to marry Lady Anne, as, not from vice but thoughtlessness, he had, though but just ftve-andtwenty, been forced to mortgage his only unentailed estate so considerably, that, as he had no ready money, a large sum with a wife could alone set him free ; and as he knew that his father had no money to

spare, he had carefully concealed from him an embarrassment which he well knew it would distress him not to be able to remove.

Lady Jane was the daughter of the

Earl Earl of M- , and Lady Anne of the

Marquis of D , and both were left by

their fathers to the guardianship of Mr. Percy. As Mrs. Percy was living when these noblemen died, her husband's wards came to reside with her; and till he went abroad with a tutor at the age of eighteen, Percy had many opportunities of being with the young and beautiful cousins, of whom one was four, the other three years younger than himself.

At one-and-twenty he returned, and found Lady Jane, who with her cousin had been presented at court, a reigning belle in the fashionable world, and more full of fascination than ever: but though courted by all who beheld her, her eyes seemed, he thought, to look as tenderly as ever on *him.* Not so Lady Anne's; her eyes never sought his; on the contrary, they seemed to avoid them: and when he returned,

after after a long and severe illness, during which his life was despaired of, the one wounded his self.love, while the other soothed it. Lady Anne, when she saw him, was so struck with the change in his appearance that she could not at first speak; and when she did, it was to say in a faltering voice, and with eyes filled with tears,—" Oh ! Harry, how *ill* you look ! I declare I should scarcely have known you ! and you look so old !"

" Don't mind what that raven says, Harry," exclaimed Lady Jane, " she always sees the worst side of every thing; and I assure you / think, though you look as if you had been *unwell,* you never looked handsomer nor younger in your life."

Harry held a hand of each at this moment; and it is certain that he pressed Lady Jane's very tenderly, while he held Lady Anne's so coldly that she withdrew it.— B *5* From From that moment Lady Jane stood on a vantage ground with Harry Percy which she never lost; for he thought the remark of Lady Jane kind, that of the other cruel; and though deeply impressed before he went abroad in favour of Lady Anne, he saw not, he heeded not, he understood not the faltering voice, the involuntary tears

that accompanied her remark,—a remark impelled by real tenderness thrown by the anxieties of tenderness completely off its guard. Nor did he observe that, though her words were flattering, Lady Jane's feelings were cold. He therefore banished Lady Anne from his best affections, and received Lady Jane to them,—like many others, rejecting the substance for the shadow.

Lady Anne soon saw, and secretly deplored, the superiority of Lady Jane's influence over Percy to her own; for she thought *she* loved him better than her.

cousin, cousin, and for his *own* sake she wished that he had preferred her. But hers was no common mind, no common character. She thought that passions were given us for our slaves, not our tyrants; and the love which was not likely to be returned', she felt it her duty first to conceal, and ultimately to *subdue,* or at least to keep within proper bounds. But her trials were severe ; and while she witnessed the progress of Percy's attachment to Lady Jane, she sighed to think how happy such evidences of love would have made her; and she sighed the more, because she felt assured that this devoted love was thrown away on one who was too volatile to feel the value of it. No wonder, therefore, that the usually *brusque* and severe manner of Lady Anne should become still more so.

" The carriage has been at the door this hour, Jane, and Mrs. Corbet and I have been waiting twenty minutes for

you," you," said Lady Anne one morning, " and yet you are not ready—It is very strange you can never be. punctual."

" Nor you *patient,* Anne."

" What is the matter ?" said Percy entering. " Lady Anne, you look disturbed."

" Oh ! she has only been scolding me, as usual."

" Scolding you ?"

" You, I suppose, think no one can be so hard-hearted as to scold such a divinity !" replied Lady Anne with a laugh that was *no* laugh.

" But what has Lady Jane done ?"

" She is not ready, according to custom —and I am sure, Harry, I have heard you say that punctuality is a virtue."

" True,—but is not impatience a *vice?"*

" *There,* Anne ! do you hear that ?"

u I do," she replied, blushing deeply from pain at being reproved by the man she

loved ; loved ; " and I dare say, yes—I was—I am too impatient."

" Amiable candour !" cried Percy : " and I in return must own that I think Lady Jane's habit of not being punctual a most vile one, and "

" What is that you are saying, young gentleman ?" said Lady Jane turning round from the glass, at which she was adjusting her head-dress, and looking at him with one of her most arch looks and dimpled smiles.

" I was saying the truth—that you are

not perfect •*"* but looking fondly and

even familiarly in her face as he spoke,

* If to thy share some female errors fall, Look in thy face and one forgets them all.'

" Thank ye, young man—very civil, and very *new.* But Lady Anne has a face also, and a very handsome one it is."

" But not a face to be looked up at as

yours her voice faltered,—" I meant that my face had not the *charms* of yours, and therefore was not likely to be looked at *so, so* fondly."

" Well said, modest, humble Lady Anne! But I must tell Harry,—may I ?"

" If you please ; for the disingenuousness of being silent when you accused me before, is on my mind."

" What a delicate conscience is thine!" said Lady Jane laughing.

" O Percy !" she exclaimed, as he returned and hung over her delighted while he handed her down stairs," I have Anne's confessions to make."

And Lady Anne staid behind till she thought all was said. Then, with one of her most majestic looks, she gave him her hand when he returned to meet her. But if she meant the look to awe Percy into forbearing to compliment her on her modest idea of her own face, it was thrown away; for he felt

that that what Lady Anne said was *just*,—he *could* not have looked at *her* in that manner,—and he was too honest to say what he could not mean. Whether Lady Anne suspected this truth I know not; but she felt sad and uncomfortable, and was very glad Percy did not accompany them in their drive.

It is very certain that Lady Jane dearly loved Lady Anne, and when alone with her every feeling but of affection towards her was at rest; but when with her in the presence of others, she had such a consciousness of Lady Anne's superiority, and such a restless dread lest others should perceive it too, that she could not be easy without playing upon her noble cousin, and pointing out the bad style of her dress, and her occasional roughness of reproofs and manner. There are two sorts of jealousy: —the one struts a heroine with a poisoned bowl and bloody dagger—the other is only

armed

armed with pins and needles, and is no heroine at all:—but she makes such a use of her weapons, that she does as much and more harm to domestic happiness, and the interests of society, than her more lofty and impassioned sister.—This anti.heroic jealousy was felt by Lady Jane, and it impelled her to stick pins, that is, to inflict trifling wounds on Lady Anne, except when *alone*, and then affection was triumphant.

" My dearest Anne," said Lady Jane during thtir drive, " I am afraid I distressed you by my flippancy just now ?"

" No—you only fretted me, and to that I am pretty well accustomed."

" How sorry I am ! But I will learn to behave better—indeed I will—for I am sure I love you, Anne! tenderly love you."

" It would be strange if you did not, Jane I it would be strange if two orphans like us, left to the care of the same guar

dian, and nearly akin in blood, should not love each other. It would be unnatural, it would be base."

"Aye, indeed; and I should be wickedly ungrateful, Anne, if I did not love you—. for you are so kind to me! How should I get out of the embarrassments my extravagance involves me in but for you ?"

"Nonsense!" replied Lady Anne. "I have so few wants myself, that I can supply yours—and I have a pleasure in doing so."

Here the coach stopped at a shop in Bond.street, and the door was instantly thronged with fashionable men. Away flew all the pensive, sentimental graces Lady Jane's countenance had worn as she gazed on the saddened one of Lady Anne, and she beamed on the beaux from the door of the carriage in all the brilliance of a reigning belle.

" I think I see Lady Anne in yon VOL. I. B 10 corner," corner," said Lord Lorimer,—" I hope her ladyship's well," bowing very respectfully, having only given Lady Jane a nod.

The latter felt the difference, and was piqued. " No," she replied for her cousin, " Lady Anne is very unwell. Don't you see how she is muffled up ?"

" I never was better in my life," said Lady Anne leaning forward, and speaking in her most abrupt manner; " and my being *muffled* up, as Lady Jane calls it, is an act of choice, not necessity."

" You hear her; you see she will not allow me to make an excuse for her old woman's dress.—Is she not, my lord, a beautiful blowsy?"

" Beautiful she always is," replied Lord Lorimer.

" Oh ! I know why *you* think so:— it is in return for Lady Anne's saying you were—but Idare not repeat what she said."

" You

** You overpower me, Lady Jane," said Lord Lorimer conceitedly.

" It is true,—is it not, Lady Anne ? Did you not highly extol Lord Lorimer ?" —added Lady Jane, well knowing what her answer would be.

.** I never speak against my conscience," replied Lady Anne roughly, " and therefore I *could* not do it." . " O fy, fy, Lady Anne ! what have you said *t* But indeeed, my lord, you need not look so angry; for women, you know, are always rude to those they like best."

" Yes, yes," said Lord Lorimer, " that is human nature."

" But it is not *mine*, my lord, I assure you," cried Lady Anne angrily. " Lady Jane, I choose to drive on, for I am tired of this nonsense." So saying, she desired the footman to give her order, and the coach proceeded.

" Dear

" Dear Anne!" said Lady Jane, " I see I have offended again."

" Yes;—I am angry now.—What could induce you to flatter that coxcomb Lord Lorimer at my expense ? "

" I am sure I don't know; but I believe it was from compassion, lest he should fall in love with you;—for your haughtiness, Anne, is as powerful a preservative from the effects of your charms, as is the offensive smell of some beautiful but poisonous berries: their hue attracts, but their scent repels: therefore the thirsty traveller escapes."

" Am I so *veiy* rude, so *very* repellent,

Jane?"

" RATHER SO, my dear j and but for

my little hint to save the poor man's selflove, you would have made Lord Lorimer your foe for life."

" No great harm if I had. But how

can can you delight to talk such stuff to these fops, these loungers, these killers of time?"

" Oh ! a very harmless amusement. I am only spreading a few weak nets for a few harmless birds, a few hopping sparrows, and they are so slender they can break them at any time."

" But suppose, in the meanwhile, a bird of real value should, angry at your levity, escape from your net that is more skilfully woven ?" ■ .

" Oh! if you mean Harry Percy ! believe me, Anne, his heart is too surely mine for almost any thing I can do to break the chain.—No, Anne, I fear no rival influence, not even yours." (Mrs. Corbet had just alighted to go into a shop, or Lady Jane would not have said this.)

" *Mine !*—It is unkind, Jane, to mock me thus," replied Lady Anne: " you may well scorn all fear of *me* as a rival."

" No

" No such thing, Lady Anne! Of all women in the world, if you, as Percy says, would but deign to be *agreeable*, I should fear *you* with him, and every one."

" Does Percy say that of me?"

" Yes:—he thinks it is all you want to be irresistible."

" I wish I had known that sooner!" thought Lady Anne.

" Positively, my dear girl," continued Lady Jane, " you are like a man who has the 20,000/. prize in his bureau, and will not give himself the trouble of claiming it. Here's a throat, white and round as ever Phidias formed, and yet you conceal it as if it were hideous! Here is hair, jetty and glossy as a raven's plume, and you hide it under a bushel,—I mean a cap, —but it is a cap as big as a bushel.' And here is a foot, a model for a

statuary, of which you don't suffer even the tip of a toe to be visible! My dear Anne, if

you

you were *to* condescend to shine forth in all your charms, I should hate you mortally."

" Nay, this is mere trifling," replied Lady Anne; " why *should* I try to please ? The only man, you know, as you have unhappily surprised my secret, whom I ever wished to please, is lost to me for ever, and * I can hope no more.'"

The deep desponding tone in which this was spoken aroused all the affectionate nature of Lady Jane, and she exclaimed—" Don't talk so, Anne, I can't bear it; and I would resign fifty Percies, rather than make you wretched."

" But there arc *not* fifty Percies, Jane. Alas ! there is only *one."*

" No, not in your foolish eyes;—but in mine there may be many :—and really, though I love him more than a *little,* only say the word, my beloved Anne, and I will say No, should he ask me to say Yea."

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" But he *loves* you, Jane ;—and I prize his happiness beyond my own:—therefore I *wish* him to marry you.—But tell me, Jane! In order to reconcile myself to the disgrace of loving a man who never -asked me to love him, don't you think .before he went abroad / was his favourite, and that his attentions warranted my partiality?".

" Why,—yes, I *do* think so," replied Lady Jane, a conscious feeling making her blush deeply.

" Enough, I am satisfied," replied Lady Anne, and the coach stopped at a shop in St. James's-street. A beggar immediately came up, and asked charity of Lady Jane.—" Do, dear Lady Anne,'* she cried, " lend me half-a-crown for this poor wretch."

** What! give alms in such a public street as this, Jane! It looks so Pharisaical!"

"What

" What signifies the look ?—Now *do* oblige me; for, as usual,I have no money."

" Well,—there is what you desire;— but it is so beggarly, Lady Jane, never to have money in your pocket!"

" No,—it is wise if you will give me yours,—and it *is fashionable,* as no one wears pockets,"

" Nonsense!—You know that I mean it is wrong to have no money of your own about you. I wish, dear Jane, as your true friend, I wish that you would learn to pay your debts, and be just before you are generous."

" Nay, Anne, remember what the man says in the play about Justice being a hobbling beldame, who can't overtake Generosity." ..... , . i .• .. .•.

" Yes, Jane, I do remember;—and I

regret that the very great man who wrote

that *speech* should have put forth so

c 2 perni

pernicious a sentiment;—for the man $_{w}$ho "

" Hush ! hush ! dear. Anne," interrupted Lady Jane, " or rather dear Joseph ! for, if you disapprove one brother, I hate the other; and you were going on

so like him ; * for the man who *

How do you do ? How do you ?" cried Lady Jane, interrupting herself, and Mr. Percy came up to the coach-window.

"Joseph!" said Lady Jane, "here's tour guardian." . *

"What! what did you call her?" asked Mr. Percy.

" Why, sir, I am Charles, and her ladyship Joseph Surface, at your service. And you, guardian, why, *you* shall be....". But come into the carriage, there's a good gentleman:" and he got in. " Yes, guardian,—yes—you shall be Sir Peter Teazle."

" With all my heart, ward ; but where is my *Ladij Teazle ?"*

" O sir I" she replied, affecting to hide her face and blush, " if you would but *see* her and accept her, sir, she is here before you ! I have long wished for this opportunity, sir, and let my *blushes* speak for me!"

" But what will my *son* say ?"

" O sir I never mind what he says.— I prefer you;—and he can't help himself. —I think you, indeed I do, a great deal handsomer than he is."

" Handsomer I may be; *but* I fear that I want what my son says you have so *exclusively,* Lady Jane, and that is *charm:—v.* therefore I advise you to prefer Harry to me."

"Well then, what say you to Lady Anne?"

" Alas! I fear Lady Anne will have nothing to say to me. But this I will

say$_{>}$ say, that were / a young man, I should have much to say *to her."*

^{te} O you cruel, mortifying, ungrateful guardian! So then I see you prefer Lady Arme to mel" and she hid her mortification in a pretended sob. " What, are you thinking of Lady Anne while you are looking at me so intently?"

" I was thinking, Lady Jane, how airs and graces like yours would become me ; how / should look playing tricks like these."

" Like an elephant dancing a bolero, my dear!"

So I thought;—but how long, Jane, will it become you to dance these boleros ? I feel that all this may be charming in youth: but youth is a small part of human existence;—and I was carrying my eye further, and beholding you a few years hence."

"And

" And what do you see, Anne?" replied Lady Jane in a tone of alarm.

" Oh ! I hope, Jane, that all this playful gaiety, harmless as summer lightning* will end in the mild lustre of a calm summer's evening.'"

" Thank you, *dear* candid Anne," replied Lady Jane.

" You. think all this lightning will go off without any destructive. storms, do you,% Lady Anne *V* said Mr. Percy.

" I *hope* so," hesitatingly replied Lady. Anne. " Jane has a good head, and an excellent heart."

t(A truce, sweet Anne, with your flattery j or you will turn my head, however good it may be."

The coach at this moment stopped at

H -t's at the corner of Sydney's alley,

and Lady Jane got out. After a few minutes she returned with a very handsome shirt-pin in her hand, and followed by the

shopman

shopman with a large case of jewels. As soon as they had driven off, Lady Jana exclaimed, .

" Oh ! I have almost ruined myself— but they were so beautiful I could not resist! Only see!" So saying, she opened the cases and exhibited a fine set of pink topazes with strings of large pearl intermixed, for necklace and bracelets—"And here, guardian," said Lady Jane, " here is a present for you !" (giving the pin to Mr. Percy.)

" 1 hope you have not been so foolish," replied he gravely, " to squander much money on this unnecessary piece of expense ?—Pray what did it cost, if I may venture so rude a question ?" " " I dare say Jane does net know herself," observed Lady Anne unguardedly.

" How! then she cannot have paid for it!"

. . " . « Paid

. " Paid for it! No, to be sure," replied Lady Jane carelessly, " I have a bill there." " Then these fine things are not paid for, which you have just

made your own 1" " Certainly not; for I did not expect when I came out to be tempted to such extravagance."

" And what will be the price of these. bawbles?"

" Oh! a few hundreds!" " A few hundreds!" exclaimed Mr. Percy changing colour.—" There, madam! take back your present; for I will not increase a debt so wantonly and needlessly incurred."

" You are not serious, sir?"
" Indeed I am."

" There, this is all *your* doing, Lady Anne," said Lady Jane pettishly.

" If it was, Lady Anne foresaw not the consequences of what she said," replied Mr. Percy.

c 5 «T be

** I believe you think Lady Anne can't do wrong, Sir," Said Lady Jane in a tone. Of pique.

" I wish I could think the same of your Ladyship; for, in my opinion, running in debt thus carelessly and unnecessarily is wrong; and excuse me, Lady Jane, but what vexes me in my ward, I should think criminal, and it would make me *miserable* in my *sorts wife."*

Here Lady Anne felt faint, and let down the glass for air. Though we know a misfortune to be unavoidable, when it comes we are not able to meet it with firmness at first. It was evident from this speech that Mr. Percy knew his son's intentions *were Jixed,* and that the offer Would soon be made, and she shrunk from the certainty thus announced ; nor could she contemplate without generous alarm, from her knowledge of Lady Jane's extravagance, the probable distress which

such

such an union would entail on the fatherin-law, if not on the husband. A perturbed silence had succeeded to this conversation, and to Mr. Percy's positive refusal to retain the shirt-pin; and as soon as they all alighted at Mr. Percy's house in Grosvenor-square they separated; and all, with the exception of Mrs. Corbet, in no happy frame of mind retired to dress.

Mr. Percy could not drive from his memory the observation made unguardedly by Lady Anne, because it was evidently the result of a previous knowledge of her cousin's habits and character;—nor could he forget the manner of Lady Jane when he interrogated her respecting the jewels ; for, much as incurring the debt itself alarmed and vexed him, her manner alarmed him still more, as it showed that such transactions were habitual to her, and .that she was at once free from her own .reproaches for her extravagance, and cal<. lous

lous to his implied censure of it. Besides, he himself had seen in Lady Jane a love of high play; he had also often heard her bet, till he had been at length provoked to tell her, that he considered betting in a woman to be both indelicate and unfeminine. But he knew he could never make his son, as he was now seriously in love, behold Lady Jane with his eyes: he therefore resolved to endeavour to think Lady Jane's faults would, as Lady Anne said, be rectified by her good heart and excellent understanding.—Lady Jane's thoughts, meanwhile, were as painfully busy as Mr. Percy's : —she could not but feel that if Mr. Percy was vexed at her incurring one debt, he would sternly disapprove the involvement of many, and she dreaded lest chance or inquiry should bring to his knowledge the amount of her pecuniary embarrassments ; while Lady Anne also walked pensively backwards and forwards

in in her own apartment, thinking over of .what had recently passed : but uppermost in her mind was Percy's observation, that if she would condescend to be agreeable, she would be irresistible, and Lady Jane's flattering assurances, that if instead of veiling she would display her beauty, she, even she, should fear her for a rival. —" And *would* I, if I *could*, rival Jane in the heart of the man she loves ?" said Lady Anne to herself.—" But *does* she love him ? No,—not. as he ought to be loved.—Still, perhaps, she loves him as well as she can love,—and that is not enough to induce her to conquer her mischievous habits, which will, I

foresee, alienate the father, and make the son wretched. Oh ! I fear that the lightning will not go off without many a storm ! and the promised union will not be a happy one." Here, unable to pursue the course of her own thoughts, she rung for her maid.— . . ..* « And " And my dress too, as well as manner, is wrong, I find.—At leaf t I feel, I own it is unlike other people's," thought Lady Anne—" Well, and that's wrong. Singularity of appearance, I have said, speaking of others, is either a mark of offensive disregard to the opinion of other people, or of excessive conceit, or of incipient insanity—and yet, it seems, I dress singularly myself! But I will improve in this respect. I will try to be admired. Suitors and wooers I must have, as the daughter

of the marquis of D , and a great

heiress cannot fail of *them*—but Jane, happy Lady Jane, is loved *chiefly* for *herself* alone, and that I envy her."

Mrs. Corbet was indeed, as I before observed, the only one of the party who returned home as happy, and only as wise, as when she went out. This lady, the daughter of a baronet, had married what is called .prudently and respectably, and .■; [1] had had reached the age of fifty.eight with an unblemished reputation. . Her qualities were negative qualities; and when she was left a widow with an independent though not a large income, Mr. Percy, then re-; cently deprived of a wife whom he adored, and whom his wards both loved and respected, was very glad to take advantage of his relationship to Mrs. Corbet's husband to invite her to take up her abode at his house, and be the companion and chaperone of Lady Anne and Lady Jane; for Mr. Percy knew that, if Mrs. Corbet did them no good, she would do them no harm ; and that he thought was sufficient, as he flattered himself that an excellent governess and the society of his admirable wife had already satisfactorily completed the education which the parents of his noble wards had begun.

And Mr. Percy could not have chosen a chaperone for the fair cousins who r-.: T would would have suited them better; for Mrs. Corbet was acquiescent in her temper,. rarely gave a dissenting opinion, and was much fonder of sitting silent, lost in her own reveries, than in joining in any conversation whatever—And the saucy Lady Jane used to say, that in case of a want of more lights at one of their assemblies, she thought Mrs.

Corbet with a candle stuck in her hand would make a good pendent to the statue of Silence holding a lamp in the back drawing-room, and be quite as mute and motionless. By a being of this description, therefore, the events of the morning must have passed unobserved —and she retired to dress, wholly unconscious that her companions carried with them imprinted on their brow the stamp of inward and painful perturbation. " What cap and turban, my lady, do you wear today ?" said Barnes, Lady Anne's woman.

Lady

Lady Anne paused, then with a smile replied, " Nei:her, Barnes:—you shall dress my hair without a cap today." .■' .

"Indeed, my lady!" cried Barnes, looking delighted, " and shall I dress it like Lady Jane's ?" \ ,

" Yes, if you please, Barnes :" and for once, since she came into society, the fine shape of Lady Anne's head was seen, and her beautiful hair shown to the best advantage.

" Dear me! my lady! I am so glad!" exclaimed Barnes, surveying her own performance with rapture,—" I never saw your ladyship look so well before.—.You *do* look something *like* now." And Lady Anne could not help laughing within herself at the contrast to *looking something like* now.

** So then," said she to herself, " it seems that before 1 looked like *nothing* at all!" " And pray what gown, my lady, do

you you wear today ?—There is a large party of gentlemen to dinner, I find."

" True.—By the by, I will not dine below today,—my head aches, and I will save myself for the evening, when Mr. Percy has an assembly. Therefore, Barnes, you may leave me, I will not finish dressing till it is time for the evening party to arrive." While Barnes, sorry that the dinner as well as evening party should not see her lady looking so beautiful, reluctantly retired. ,

Lady Anne's head did ache, because sa did her heart, and she wished to reposa the former and commune with the latter.

When dinner was announced, which usually waited for Lady Jane, her maid told her Lady Anne was too unwell to dine below; and her good and

affectionate feelings taking the alarm, Lady Jane ran to her cousin's room, and started and blushed when she saw Lady Anne *coffic en cheveux.* " So! you have taken my hint, I see," she exclaimed ; " and as to your illness, I believe it to be all pretence, —for I never saw you look so well in my life."

. " I am so much *given* to pretence, that I do not wonder you accuse me."

" No, no, Anne, you know I can't really suspect you of fibbing—but what ails you ?" ; " ' '

" O Jane! I am sick with many cares, and I wish to keep quiet till evening, as my head aches."

" Then do let me stay with you, deares^ Anne ! perhaps I could soothe you *I"*

" Yes, Jane, as the sight of the gallows goothes the felon who is to be hanged on it."

. " Nay, Anne, I know to what you allude."

" No, you do *not"* replied Lady Anne with quickness—" \ am thinking of you

and and Percy, but not in the way you fancy.'* Here a servant came to say that dinner had waited some time for Lady Jane; and affectionately kissing Lady Anne, while the tears stood in her beautiful eyes, she bade her adieu, and in a few minutes more she was the delight of Mr. Percy's guests as usual, and the pride of his son.

By the time the ladies retired, Lady Anne had reasoned herself into calmer thoughts, and her headache being gone, Lady Jane found her reading. " Not *dressed* yet!" said Lady Jane : " It is time you were, dear Anne ! for it is ten o'clock; and at eleven I dare say some of those who go to six parties in an evening will be here."

" Do you think I shall be an hour dressing, *IzncV* , ...

" Yes,—if you mean to be dressed up to your head—which is so. elegant that r , .. the the rest of your dress ought to be weH studied to suit it."

." I thank you for your solicitude about my appearance," replied Lady Anne smiling; " and if you will go to the company, I will join you as soon as the important business of the toilet is over."

" What gown does your ladyship wear today ?" asked Barnes, apprehensive lest the dress should not be as handsome as the head.dress.

" That white satin gown like Lady Jane's, which I have never worn."

" Indeed ! my lady ! Oh ! I am *so* glad! I thought you would never have worn it at all!" and with eager joy Barnes brought the long neglected gown.

Lady Anne had accustomed herself so much to wear dresses made high in the neck, that she could not at first bear to wear. a dress lower than the throaty—till the thought of self.approving beauty per. haps haps reconciled her to her appearance.— " But I never can endure this petticoat so .short in front," said she to Barnes. " I declare it shows more than half the foot."

** Dear, my lady," cried Barnes, " and what then ? Lady Jane shows hers; and I am sure it is not half as beautiful as your ladyship's!" And Lady Anne was not a little mortified to find that she was pleased with this observation.

** Alas!" said Lady Anne to herself, '** I have at length learnt to find that flattery, even from an inferior, is pleasant! O poor human nature !"

At last, and before the hour was out, Lady Anne was ready, and the fine suite of rooms was full of company before she 'made her appearance. A pang of jealousy shot through Lady Jane's bosom when she beheld her; and if instead of the cold look which she still wore, and the unbending majesty of her mien and

person, person, Lady Anne had borrowed her cousin's cestus awhile, Lady Jane would have lost much of her power to please, from conscious dread of so formidable a rival. But Lady Anne's expression, though placid, was pensive, and her manner, as usual, any thing but inviting.

" I am easy," thought Lady Jane, especially as Percy was by her side breathing in her ear words and accents to which she was giving her delighted attention.—Luckily for Lady Anne's composure, she saw them not; but looking neither "to the right nor to the left, she walked on through two rows of company towards the inner drawing.room. The Duke of

L— , a fine.looking man of fifty, was

there, talking to Mr. Percy, Lord Lorimer, and others : but when Lady Anne appeared in sight, he suddenly broke off his discourse to ask her name.. .

3 "It

" It is one of my wards," replied Mr. Percy.

" Oh! I suppose it is the lady then who is, as report says, to be your daughter also?"

' " No, indeed, your grace is wrong in your conjecture," replied Mr. Percy with a sigh: "it is Lady Jane Langley, and not Lady Anne Mortimer, on whom my son has fijfed his affections."

** Lady Jane must be a very extraordinary woman indeed to surpass that exquisite creature," said the duke.

" Yet she does surpass her, duke," observed Lord Lorimer.

" Indeed!" returned the duke incredulously.

" Not in my opinion," cried Mr. Percy hastily.

Lady Anne Mortimer! Oh! the daughter of the late Marquis of D—.

.*1 '* .. and

and like him too.—What a noble carriage! She looks her rank!"

" Yes,—haughty enough!" again observed Lord Lorimer.

" I like a proud woman, my lord," replied the duke with quickness.

" Then Lady Anne would just suit your grace ; and I should be very proud to dance at your wedding," rejoined Lord Lorimer, bowing low as he spoke: " but I suppose there would be nothing but minuets danced at it;—for the duchess is much too stately for any thing else, and—'* *Here* he was forced to break off, as Lady Anne was near enough to hear what he said ; and bowing to her with. t|be utmost respect, he hoped her iadyship had quite recovered her illness of the morning,

" I told you in the morning, my lord," said Lady Anns very roughly, " that I

VOL. i. D was was in perfect health ; therefore I Tntiit wonder at such inquiries from you in4the evening."

Lord Lorimer, nothing daunted, {*te*turned, " Why is Lady Anne Mortimer like a hollytree? — Answer — Because, though beautiful and attractive to look at, you cannot approach her without[1] being in danger from her prickles, *alias* sharpness."

" But the holly, my lord," said the duke,

(bowing, as he spoke, to Lady Anne) " is in its full perfection in winter only, and this lady seems in the perfection of her beauty in the very spring of life." He then desired Mr. Percy to present him. He did so; and for awhile interrupted her intended reply to Lord Lorimer.

** My sharpness, as you call it, my lord," said Lady Anne, turning to Lord Lorimer, " has so improved your wit, that

• •- wfcre were I to liken *you,* to any thing in the .vegetable world, it would be to a bed of chamomile, which is the better for being trodden upon."

At this moment, in all the radiance of her countenance, and with all the graces of her manner, Lady Jane, flushed with the bloom of happy love, joined the group.

" Who is that Hebe?" whispered the duke to Mr. Percy. . ..;.,; ..:,

" My other ward,—rLady Jane Langley j"—and he presented him to her immediately :—but before he could address her, Lord Lorimer put his hand to his cheek, as if in pain. :;..;. .

/,,..<** What is the matter?" asked Lady Jatie. ;..- .

yfrs**Oh! the old matter. Lady Anne has; been giving me a blow. Would you believe it ?. she. compared me to a whole bed of chamomile!"

D 2 " Poor

" Poor dear!—.But be consoled, my lord. Recollect what I told you today \—■ that I know in her heart she admires you greatly."

" O that 1 had at this moment a window in my heart!** cried Lady Anne with indignation.

* Well, Anne, that's kind; for it would, I know, save Lord Lorimer'$ many an ache."

" O thou generous, soothing being!'* cried he, " but for your flattering assurances, I could not support the misery of thinking myself abhorrent to Lady. Anne."

" I must tell your grace," said Lady Jane, "that I call Lady Anne Sorrow, and myself Pity, in Mrs. Barbauld's. charming allegory—Pity being forced to follow Sorrow through the world, to drop balm into the wounds which she has made."

" I should

" I should think," replied he, *' that your ladyship would nave enough to do to heal the wounds which you inflict yourself."

" Oh! but the wounds which yoa allude to, sir, are made by arrows which tickle while they wound* . Those which Lady Anne uses are fc>f a very different description,—and—" Here she was interrupted by Percy, who now drew near:; and while she turned on him eyes filled with joy and tenderness,. he took her hand, and led her Up to his father, who retired with them into another apartment $ where Percy, full of d.eh.ght$_s$ in which Mr. P■?rcy did not share, presented Lady Jane to him as his betrothed bride. Lord Lprimer mean while went to pay his court whereat would be more thankfully received ; and the duke took this opportunity of trying to engage Lady Anne in conversation.

.. . .. "I had

" I had the honour," said he, " to know your ladyship's father."

" Indeed!" she replied with a look beaming with affection: " it *was* an honour to know him:" and the duke smiled at the bluntness of this speech, a speech so rarely addressed to a man of his rank, and one too so renowned for his talents. But he forgave it because of the filial tenderness which dictated it; and he delighted Lady Anne so much by the praises he bestowed on her father, that she invited him to sit by her on the sofa. She also said most cordially, when the duke reluctantly took leave as soon as he saw that every one else was going, ** "The manner in which your grace has spoken of my father, and the clear and just estimate which you formed

of his worth, prove you to have been highly worthy of his acquaintance j and I doubt not, as yours

were

were kindred minds, that he highly and properly valued *you.'**

" But may I presume, as *his* friend, to pay my respects to his daughter?"

" Certainly, sir," she replied : and the duke, more than half in love, sighed, bowed, and departed. Some few of the company however remained for the purpose of playing cards; and one lady coming up to Lady Anne, who was talking to Mr. Percy, asked her to make up a rubber.

** No indeed," replied Lady Anne roughly, " I never play cards; I think it a disgraceful waste of time:" and the lady, looking displeased and foolish, bowed coldly, and went in search of a more obliging person.

** My dear Lady Anne," said Mr. Percy, " why did you make that woman your enemy?" „. .'* And have I done so ?"

«Un

" Undoubtedly:—you not only seemed proud of your own superior wisdom in not understanding cards, but you showed that you thought meanly of her for being a card-player. I own to you, your words and manner shocked me;—I felt *itphari* laical* (to use a phrase of your own)."

" Indeed, sir! Then I am sure I do not wonder that you were shocked."

" You know, Lady Anne, how highly I admire you; therefore I hope you will pardon this freedom: but indeed this *brusquerie*, as Percy calls it, is a fault, and, as he also says, it is your only fault."

" Does Mr. Percy say so, sir?"

" He does j and what he disapproves and 1 disapprove,—we who love and honour you,—surely you will think ought to be well weighed before it is persisted in. As to card-playing, I deem your objections unfounded and unjust. It is *the Jew*, not the many, who have talents for conversation,

sation, and who are capable of relishing

disburse ori nMSls, politics; of the belleslettress J arid unless persons have strong, Full, and generous minds, conversation in all societies infallibly falls into gossip and detraction, unless cards are introduced; and when in such parties, T have congratulated myself on being able to play, as it enabled me thereby to make an effort to save reputations, and at least call forth a degree, though a low degree, of mental exertion."

" But I will never associate with people who can't converse."

" Lady Anne, you flatter yourself: you must take human nature as you find it, and bear with the infirmities of other peoplei else, what is your benevolence but a name? However, since what I have as yet said has no effect, let me put *another* and *cdmmort* case to you. There are diseases which, in their progress over ."..'- *'".'" x>5* the

the body, weaken even the strongest and most studious mind, and doom the old man or woman, however vigorous their intellect previously, to utter incapacity of relishing,or even attending to reading, writing, or conversation. In such instances I have seen cards a very great resource, and the afflicted object become suddenly forgetful of his infirmities by the entrance of a friend who could make up a rubber. Now suppose me in this state, and you and Lady Jane attending on me like affectionate children:—Would you not envy Lady Jane her power of aiding me by making up my whist party, or engaging me at picquet ? And would you not be induced to think that any power which may be necessary to minister to the comfort of an invalid, and soothe the irritable moments of a suffering friend, is a power which the proudest of human intellects need not scorn to acquire?" .

« But,

** But, dear sir, is it not shocking to see 3.;man cr woman on the verge of the grave, interested in the fluctuations of a

..card-table?"

. " If it be the only amusement which decaying faculties can enjoy, and. if the mind by being employed can be kept in that cheerful quiet state which is necessary to the preservation of what remains of existence, I own to you I am not so rigid in my notions, as not to view with complacency the chamber of sickness cheered by a harmless rubber, and the daemon of news and lies,. the: spirit of detraction, frightened away by the four honours and the odd trick; for no one can be always praying; and I believe the Deity never receives more grateful incense than that of a cheerful spirit, and a mind willing to make the best of its situation."

sijs:!*;My dear sir/' said Lady Anne affectionately, " I will learn to play at cards,

.tec! '. lest lest I, if it ever be necessary, which God forbid! should be wanted-to make up *your* -rubber." : f .

That night Lady Jane followed Lady Anne into her room, to tell her that Percy had declared himself, and she had accepted him; and Lady Anne was very glad when Lady Jane, too happy and too delicate to notice her emotion, retired, and left her to indulge her feelings alone.—But when she rose the next day, though her night had been a sleepless one, Lady Anne's manner was calm, and her countenance composed, and she congratulated Percy without any visible effort.

A few days after the Duke of L i. . . . , who had seen her several times since the night of the assembly, made her proposals in form, and in person, but was refused; and as he saw her change of countenance when Percy suddenly entered. the room, .-...<. he he was sure Iter heart was engaged, and therefore dropped his suit entirely.!

Percy, the object of affection to these young and beautiful heiresses, was at this time five-and.twenty; and if personal charms in a man could justify their admiration, it was indeed completely justified. But both the noble cousins required mind, virtues, and accomplishments in the being of their

choice; and Percy was in heart, temper, and intellectual attainments, all that their ambition could desire in a lover or a husband.

. At the early age of fwo-and twenty he became a rich and independent man by the death of an uncle, and was soon after returned to parliament for the borough which his uncle had represented. Nature had given him great talents, which education had perfected ; and the eloquence which had early distinguished the school,boy, study and incessant practice had ri.■ ... pened pened into powers of oratory which did honour to the man. His maiden speech in parliament, on a question not of party but of general interest, was received with universal applause, and he was hailed by both sides of the house, as likely to become an ornament and a support to that party which he should ultimately embrace.

But it was not the intention of Percy to become the adherent of any set of men ; for, like most young men who are con*, scious of great powers, he scorned to tread in any beaten path, he scorned to have his opinions influenced by any thing but his own conception of truth, and his utterance of them restrained by any bounds but those which the strictest conscience approved. In spite, therefore, of those great authorities which teach that parties are necessary in all free governments, and that the exertions of individual patriots must

.[1] always always be unavailing to serve or save their country; and full of that tenaciousness the result of youthful inexperience, and that ardent, sanguine temper which fancies that what is pure and perfect in theory may be easily reduced to practice,—Percy still adhered to his resolution of being what is called an independent member, though tempted by the offer of places on one side, and the prospect of popularity on the other. Therefore, as he bad not bound himself to think all that was said or done on one side of the house right, and all on the other side wrong, Percy occasionally lent the aid of his eloquence to the measures of ministers, or gathered laurels as a welcome volunteer in the ranks of opposition; while each description of politicians listened with admiring attention to his eloquence; and like all possessions which we covet and ad,mire without being able to call them our own,

they they probably admired it the more, because it was out of their power to appropriate its services to themselves.

When love assumed its turn to reign over the susceptible heart of Harry Percy, instead of impeding it only served to forward the career of the orator; for the dear ambition of shining in the eyes of the woman whom he adored, the hope of receiving her praise when the debates of the preceding evening greeted her eyes on the breakfast table, inspired him to new flights of eloquence: and while cheered by both sides of the house, the lover's heart beat only with anticipation of the applauses that awaited him from the lips .of Lady Jane, and he enjoyed " *the future in the instant."* But though Lady Jane enjoyed her triumph over the heart of a man so distinguished ; though her vanity was gratified, by leading him captive whose splendid talents could enchain • ·J the

the admiration of senates^ s$A .she was■ too full of her own conscious powers, too proud of her own ability to make captives, to enjoy as she might otherwise have done the exertions and the eloquence of Percy *i* and while at *her* heart,, at *her* admiration, the shafts of his oratory were directed,. it was the bosom of another that they reach*td,;* and it was LADY ANNE alone who felt what Percy wished that. .LADY JANE should feeL V..v. ' .;?..,.....!.

Though Lady Anne had been of age two months, Lady Jane was only twenty. However, it was agreed that the lovers should not wait till the last year of her minority was expired, but that the nuptials should be solemnized as soon as the necessary preparations could be made. A few days alter tt■is had been finally determined upon, Lady Jane, evidently in very low spirits, entered Lady Anne's apartment. ... . . . ,

« What

" What is the matter, Jane?" asked the latter in a tone pf alarm. ,

" I am ashamed to tell you," said Lady Jane, "though you alone are the person who can relieve my distress."

" If I can relieve your distress, look on it as already relieved," replied Lady Anne affectionately. " Yet *how you*, with *your* prospects, can have any sorrows, I cannot imagine," she added with a sigh.

" If *you* had my prospects, Anne, I know you would have none," replied Lady Jane; " for *you* would have no fears, no painful consciousness, no embarrassments :—and oh ! how much more worthy are you of my happy prospects than I!"

" i begin now to understand the nature of your grief," answered Lady Anne rather coldly; " but I wish you would come to the point at once."

** I will:—Terror lest Mr. Percy should

conceive

conceive a violent prejudice against me, and forbid his son, on peril of his renouncing him, to make me his wife, pre- ■ vents my daring to acknowledge that I am in debt; and what I want you to do is, to lend me money sufficient to pay some heavy bills which my maid shall give you." S.

'* Give you money, you mean, Jane ; lending it is out of the. question."

" Indeed it is not; I mean to pay you back every farthing."

" Yes,—no doubt you *mean* it,—but you will never be able. However, I do not even *wish* to be repaid :—to prevent your becoming a wife against the approbation of your husband's father, is a duty

which I owe you, and But to what do

your debts amount ?" >

" Oh ! to a few hundreds."

" No more ?—Then I can assist you without difficulty. But I thereby, 1 hope,

purchase

purchase a right to conjure you, if you value your husband's peace and your own respectability., never never to incur debts again!"

Softened, obliged, and every worthy feeling triumphant, what was there Lady Jane did not promise at this moment ? what was there she did not think herself capable of performing ? And Lady Anne confiding, because she wished to confide, authorised Lady Jane to send her fier bills, and promised to let ihem be discharged.

Two days after, as Mr. Percy, Harry Percy, and the cousins were going to take a morning's drive, they saw two respectable-looking people with five children waiting in the hall, whom the servants were vainly trying to keep back; a&d. >be»; Lady Jane appeared, the others haying been waiting for her, the whole group precipitated themselves forward, and obstructed

strutted her on her passage, exclaiming, as they did so, " God bless you, my lady ! God bless you!"

Lady Jane visibly affected, and saying " There, go go, good people, you distress me," endeavoured to get past; but Percy catching her hand stopped her, and insisted on an explanation of the scene which they beheld.

" It is nothing—nothing," she replied. "Aye—God bless her I" cried the mother, " your good folks never think themselves good, but I'll tell your honour all about it:" and Lady Jane, though not displeased at having her generosity known to those whose good opinion she was most ambitious of, attempted, but in vain, to keep her silent.

" You must know," said the poor woman, " that good young lady, while alone in her coach one morning, saw me crying bitterly, and looking so ill I and so she

asked asked me what ailed me; and I told her as how my husband had been bound for a friend, and had lost his all and was thrown into prison, leaving me to work for these five children and another a.coming!"

'* It is all true, your honour," said the man bowing low, " and so the next ——″ . " Nay, John—let me tell the story my own way—and so that blessed angel asked me where I lived; and the next day what does she do, but comes to see me her own self^and then she asked how much would

free ■my husband, and I told her a hundred pound. And then if she did not send some man to pay it, and my poor, John came home again!" *m*, ■■ *m.w*

" A very good deed," said Mr, Percy, looking pleased a■t Lady Jane, while Harry Percy kissed her hand in.silence, and Lady Anne said nothing,, .: /;;:■ ». ^■s^

" But that's not all, your\honour —for now says she, *VfJ^gt* wouklpet.you

up

up in business again ? and as true as I live if she did not give us a hundred more! besides clothing us all as you see; and then when we begged to know her name that we might remember it in our prayers, she said, * Pray for me as your friend, and ' the reader of all hearts will be sufficiently informed:'—and it was only yesterday that we found out where she lived, and then we all said, says we, We will go and show Mr our new clothes, and thank her, and blether; for it is not right that such a good deed should not be known, foi it is a fine example to be followed." "" ** It is indeed, and this is all true, your honour," said the poor man, " and I'm jfslopseller, quite at your lordship's serviceyif you want any thing in my way." *X :i'*t* I Honour your gratitude," said Mr. Percy, " and can assure you, for Lady Jane's sake /too' will be your friend." *130And I,"* said Harry eagerly; " and

q» so

so I dare say, if you need it, will Lady Anne."

" Undoubtedly," answered Lady Anne; while Lady Jane, on her guardian and lover's tenderly commending her for that true charity that fled from thanks and notice, turned quickly round to Lady Anne, and said in a tone of pique, " Was *this* pharisaical, Anne?"

" No, certainly not," she replied;. " but—" darting a very significant glance at her cousin. This glance was not lost on Mr. Percy; and *he* saw with pain, but Percy with indignation, that she had looked cold and unmoved while Lady Jane's benevolence was thus revealed ; and though Percy attributed her manner and her sU lence to a feeling of envy, his more just and more discerning father suspected; that Lady Anne had purer

motives for her forbearance to praise an action which certainly appeared praiseworthy.

The

The truth was, that just before Lady Anne had got ready for the drive, Ellis, Lady Jane's woman, had put into her hand her lady's bills, and she beheld with painful surprise that they amounted to some thousands, instead of hundreds. It could not be supposed, therefore, that in the *generosity* not founded *on justice*, but probably at the *expense* of it, which the gift of two hundred pounds exhibited, Lady Anne, the truly generous, because the truly just and self-denying Lady Anne, could so far prostitute her sense of right, as to praise an action which her private knowledge rendered reprehensible in her eyes. Therefore, though she correctly interpreted the expression of Percy's countenance, and sighed to think that he imputed her coldness to unworthy motives, she still persisted in not joining the general praise, and felt relieved when, the proteges of Lady Jane, having been con

VOL. i. . E signed signed to the hospitality oft the servants* hall, took leave with numberless blessings, allowing them to depart on their intended expedition. Percy was now the only happy being of the party. Mr. Percy was grave; for Lady Anne's manner had rendered him suspicious, especially as he read on Lady Jane's countenance a conscious and fearful expression, and an incessant watching of Lady Anne's, which bewildered and alarmed him.—But Harry Percy, absorbed in the recollection of Lady Jane's unobtrusive benevolence, and in the contemplation of her charms, looked on himself as the happiest'of men, in the idea of being soon united to so much beauty and virtue.

As they passed H 's shop, Lady

Jane blushed deeply, and her confusion was augmented by Mr. Percy's telling his son the anecdote of the shirt.pin, and his reason for not keeping it. Percy looked

distressed,

distressed, because Lady Jane did, and with a forced smile said he was shocked at his father's want of gallantry; and that if she had offered *him* such a gift, much as he disapproved running in debt, yet his principles

were not so rigid but that he should have accepted the present. " And indeed, dear sir," added he, " I have no fear that Lady Jane's debts will ever ruin me."

Lady Anne at this speech looked out of the window,—but her look was not unobserved by Mr. Percy; while Lady Jane turned on her unsuspecting lover eyes filled with tears of tenderness.

" I hope, Lady Jane," said Mr. Percy, " you will, before you change your situation, call in all your little bills :—little no doubt they *must* be, as my allowance to you has been too ample for you to have had any temptation to incur *large* ones.— Your noble cousin had not one debt, .and E 2 I hope I hope that you have not been slow to profit in some degree by so good an example."

" Lady Anne is my superior in every < thing, sir," replied Lady Jane, bursting into tears occasioned by, a variety of conflicting emotions.

" She is indeed a most superior being," said Mr. Percy with a sigh ; while Lady Anne, confused and distressed, remained silent, and Percy whispered in Lady Jane's ear, that *he* at least did not think her so;— on which her April face scon brightened into smiles again.

"Have you ordered II 's bill?"

asked Mr. Percy, still harping on the old and to him suspicious subject;— and Lady Jane, her countenance again clouding as she spoke, assured him that she had ; while he saw at this assurance an expression of anxious alarm overcloud the brow of . Lady Anne. At length their drive

ended, ended, and Lady Anne found herself alone with Lady Jane.

" I see, Anne," said the latter, " that you were *shocked*, not gratified, at the scene of the morning."

" I *was*, Jane—for I had recently received and looked over your enormous bills—!"

" Enormous!"

" Yes,—to an amount which you, I dare say, *dream* not of; and *1* think such bills should have been paid before two hundred pounds were expended on persons who may, after all, not be the most deserving objects

possible.—But even supposing that they are worthy, amongst your creditors are some perhaps as poor, who want the relief of being paid their just debts—for, would you believe it ? your debts are to this amount!" giving her the sum total,—over which Lady Jane ' cast an eager and hasty glance, and exclaiming claiming " I could not have believed it!" hid her face on her arm, and burst into tears.—Well indeed might she be distressed ; for she knew that she did not mean to disclose all her debts to Lady Anne, and that nearly as many more remained behind, to be discharged by herself at the first opportunity.

" Weep not, but look forward, Jane!" cried Lady Anne, " look forward to amendment, and hear what I have to say to you.—You know that besides my estates I am worth personal property to the amount of some thousands, part of which I once meant to have expended on new setting, altering and adding to my mother's jewels, to do honour to your nuptials."

Here her voice faltered—and while she paused Lady Jane eagerly cried, " Once .*meant* to expend! and do you then no longer ?"

" I can

" I cannot; for I must recall the order I have given the jeweller, in order to pay your debts."

" O no ! I cannot bear it—it *must* not be—you must have the jewels, your rank requires it."

" But your necessities require the money still more j and I must not, will not, be seduced even by *you*, and to do *honour* to you, to act against my principles, and incur a debt I cannot possibly discharge within the year." ." And why not?"

" Because the other thousands are *disposed* of—I have two distant and poor relations whom I wish to render independent: the rest of the family have neglected them, therefore it is the more incumbent on me to do my duty by them ;—and as they are old and infirm, they cannot wait to a future opportunity."

I will

I will not attempt to describe Lady Jane's feelings at finding that the removal of her own difficulties, the result of her extravagance, (for charity

like hers might also be denominated extravagance,) was to be purchased by a privation to her nobleminded cousin! However, the case was too urgent to admit of delay. Lady Anne's jewels were sent for home, and the money intended to be laid out on them, when she drew for it, was to be employed in discharging the bills of Lady Jane.

But suspicion once awakened is not easily laid asleep again, and Mr. Percy's suspicions were on the alert. The next morning he met Lady Jane's woman on the stairs looking over a long bill, and he could not resist his wish of knowing what it was, and what the amount.—" Is that

H 's bill, which your lady told me she

had sent for?"

" Yes,

" Yes, sir, it is his, and another too," replied Ellis, concluding that Mr. Percy as her lady's guardian was to pay them.

" Give them to me."

She did so, and he saw with wonder and resentment that the two bills amounted to several hundred pounds. But suppressing his feelings and keeping the bills, he desired her to tell her lady that he had commissioned her to get in every outstanding bill immediately. Ellis obeyed him ; and Lady Jane, seeing that all must be disclosed, was forced to have recourse to a glass of water to keep her from fainting. In this emergency what could she do? "At least," said she to herself, " I will make a virtue of necessity, and before disclosure is no longer avoidable I will confess all to Percy, and I trust that in my ingenuousness he will forget my fault." She did so; and Percy, £ *5* though

though surprised and shocked, lover-like, overlooked her errors in her imagined greatness of mind in confessing them, and assured her she was dearer to him than ever.

Supported therefore by his approving and confiding tenderness, she was the better able to meet his father's awful frown when she was summoned to his presence, after he had received all the bills which he had sent Ellis round to call in, and which amounted to nearly two thousand pounds ! On hearing the amount of the debt, Percy himself was as distressed though not

as angry as his father; and he was the more grieved, because he had not wherewithal to discharge it.

" I have now to ask you, madam, if these are all your debts !" said Mr. Percy sternly. And Lady Jane, resuming at once all the original honesty and generosity of

her her nature, replied, " I will answer that question, sir, only in the presence of Lady Annewho was accordingly summoned to the conference.

" Now, sir," said Lady Jane, as soon as her cousin entered, and looking at Lady Anne with an expression of affectionate triumph, " now, sir, I will answer your question.—I owe much more than the amount of the bills now in your hand. You must add to them the sum which my generous cousin had undertaken to discharge, though in order to do so she was forced to make a great personal sacrifice."

" It was *no* sacrifice, none at all, my generous, candid Jane," replied Lady Anne, gratified and affected at this unexpected virtue in Lady Jane; who, overcome by the effort, threw herself on her cousin's neck and sobbed aloud,

" O sir !" said Percy, seeing his father

himself himself affected, ** will you in a degree excuse a fault so honourably confessed and atoned for ?"

" I honour, my son," he replied, " as much as *you* can do, a generous and candid avowal of a fault which otherwise could not have been known; still my resolve is irrevocable.—I have no money to spare for unexpected demands, and you, I know, have none ; nor can I, *will* I allow Lady Anne to pay the money she has promised: therefore, on pain of my eternal displeasure, I *command* you to give up all idea of marrying Lady Jane till the whole debt is paid;—for *never,* with my consent, shall my *son* marry to run the risk of being involved and poor through life, by having a debt of this magnitude to discharge.—In a twelvemonth Lady Jane will be of age, and part of her fortune may then be sold to liquidate her debts.—A twelvemonth too

is is necessary at least for her to try to break herself of her pernicious habits; and during that time she or *you* will have an opportunity of

changing your minds, if you desire it, and breaking off an union from which *I* foresee no good will arise.

During this speech Lady Jane, bathed in tears, reclined on Lady Anne's shoulders, and Percy in great agitation paced up and down the room. " Sir, sir," said he, " this is harsh, this is *cruel*, sir."

" May be so ; but it is unalterable," replied his father.

" Dear sir! hear me, let *me* speak," cried Lady Anne, feeling deeply for both the lovers.

" No, most dear and most revered Lady Anne," said Mr. Percy, taking her hand, " I *cannot* hear you.—Though no longer your guardian, it is my duty still to watch over your interests, and not to allow you to sacrifice yourself for others not worthy such a sacrifice."

" Don't say so, sir, don't say so," cried Lady Anne; " Jane is *not* unworthy, and I should grudge no sacrifice for her sake!" Percy instantly seized Lady Anne's hand, and kissed it with grateful emotion; while, turning very pale, she hid her face in her cousin's neck; and Mr. Percy, who saw her change of countenance, and understood her feelings, more mortified than ever at his son's blind preference, darted at him a look of indignation, and left the room.

" We must get this interdiction taken off," said Lady Anne, after a pause of much emotion on all sides.

" Do that, dear, generous Lady Anne, and I shall bless you for ever.!" cried Percy.

" I will

" I will see what is to be done," she replied coldly, and left the lovers alone. But in vain did Lady Anne still request to be permitted to pay part of the debt; in vain did she entreat that the marriage might be allowed to take place,—Mr. Percy was inexorable, and repeated,

" My son may marry if he chooses it, but it will be against my publicly avowed disapprobation of his *choice*;—and I am sure Percy will never expose the woman he loves to such an insult:—besides,— who knows but during a year's trial of their constancy something may happen to prevent the marriage for ever?—and if so, O ! how I should rejoice!"

Lady Anne *feared* that *she* should rejoice too :—but too honourable to allow even a chance so flattering to her feelings to turn her aside from the duties of friendship, she still persisted in her endeavour to prevail on Mr. Percy to recall his mandate:

date:—but, " Never!" was his constant answer: " while Lady Jane remains in debt, she never, if I can help it, shall be the wife of my son."

Lady Anne, ever since Percy and her cousin became declared lovers, spent much of her time in her own apartment, from feelings and motives easy to be guessed at; and therefore she was not soon aware that something unpleasant had occurred between them. At length, however, she observed that Percy looked pale and wretched, and Lady Jane sullen;—nor was she slow to demand of the latter a reason for what she saw. .

" Oh! it is only," she replied, " that Harry is absurd and unjust."

** Only that!" answered Lady Anne with an ironical air : " I think that only is a great deal, considering he was neither absurd nor unjust before." . ."

" That is liberal in you, Anne, ^11

things considered;—but my *guardian* .would tell you he was *both* when he preferred me to you."

" We will drop that subject, if you please," replied Lady Anne coldly : " and now explain in what respect Percy in *your* eyes is absurd and unjust. Wretched I *see* he is."

" Aye,—and he is absurd in *being* wretched ;—for the truth is, he is jealous. —He cannot bear that 1 should flirt with that man worth a million who is just come from India."

" Then why *do* you flirt with him ?"

" But it is not true:—I *don't* flirt; only the poor gentleman says civil things to me, and I can't say uncivil ones to *him* in return, you know."

" Tell him you are an engaged woman."

" He knows *that*,—and I take care always ways to let him see I love Percy. —But Percy's fear is, since he has known my propensity to spend money, that this agreeable Nabob, for agreeable he certainly is, should make me such offers as might tempt me to give him the preference ; — especially as, to be *candid*, my pride is not a little hurt at the style in which Mr. Percy has presumed to talk to me,—hinting as if he thought it was an honour to Lady Jane Langley to be the wife of his son *Mr. Percy."*

" And so it *is,* Jane," interrupted Lady Anne. " It would ,be an honour to *any* woman, however high her rank, to be the choice of such a nobly.gifted creature as Harry Percy !"

" Mighty fine! I wonder whether your ladyship's father the Marquis of

D would have been of the same

opinion 1"

"He

" *He u'ould,* and so would YOUR ladyship's father."

" But my ladyship's father's daughter sees differently ;—not that she thinks she *confers* honour.—O no,—far from it indeed ;—but she cannot think she receives it. And there is my buckram guardian setting up his large eyes and looking so grand! that for fear he should have put some of his proud notions into Percy's head, I *take care* to keep the honest lad's pride down by teasing him a little, and alarming him with the idea of losing me !"

" Jane, I have no patience with you."

" You never had any, Anne."

" And shall have still less if you can be so base as to delight in tormenting a heart that loves you; a heart that...." Here, spite of herself, emotions, conscious emotions choked her utterance.

" I tell

" I tell you what, Anne," replied Lady Jane, " every one scolds me now, and I am almost weary of my life:—I see that I have alienated from me my guardian's good will, my lover's confidence, and my only friend's esteem ;—and if my situation does not change soon at *home,* I cannot answer for not seeking something better abroad."

So saying, with an air of grief and despondence unusual to a countenance so animated as hers usually was, she ran out of the room, and left her affectionate cousin in a state of alarm and agitation.

In the evening, Lady Anne on entering the drawing-room found Percy alone,— and she no longer avoided, but sought a conversation with him ;

—nor was it long before, of his own accord, he revealed to her the anxiety of his mind. Lady Jane had been quite correct in her communications. cations. She had contrived to make Percy jealous and miserable by the way in which she received the agreeable Nabob's attentions ;—having told him also, when he expostulated with her, that his father's authority had dissolved their engagement for a year, and therefore inclination was now the only bond between them.

" I can only say, my dear friend," said Percy, " that if she goes on thus, neither my brain nor health can bear the constant wretchedness I endure; for I have discovered, Lady Anne, that of all pangs to which mortals are subject, there are none so agonizing and so destructive as the pangs of jealousy."

Lady Anne could have told him this long ago;—but she had gone through, had survived, and conquered them.

" Harry," she replied, " you do not suffer alone;—Lady Jane is very wretched too.—Your father's evident disapprobation I

tion of her, and your marriage with her, have awakened all the pride, the *proper* pride of her soul; and I must say in Jane.s defence, that it must be a very galling, a very disagreeable thing to any woman to become the wife of the son, when the father would, if he could, for ever forbid the union."

" True,—most true:—but what is to be done ? for even *you* have failed to move my father's heart in our favour."

Lady Anne shook her head mournfully; and company coming in, the conference broke up.

At midnight, when the guests were departed, Lady Anne retired, but not to sleep.—She felt that, like Mr. Percy, she too had almost unconsciously looked forward with pleasure to the change which might take place in the course of a twelvemonth ;—but Mr. Percy's words had caused her to look into her own heart,

and

and her generous nature revolted at what she saw there. To undress in order to obtain sleep was impossible: therefore she dismissed Barnes, saying she would, when inclined to go to bed, undress herself ;—and then, till it was

daylight, she paced up and down her apartment, struggling with her selfish feelings, and encouraging her generous ones, till her resolution was taken and her plans fixed.

" He shall be saved if I can save him; he shall be happy if / can make him so," she exclaimed ; and then with a lightened heart she undressed and slept awhile.

When she was risen, she went for Ellis, Lady Jane's woman—and asked her, unknown to her lady, to let her once more see the bills which she had delivered to Mr. Percy. Lady Anne again cast up the sum total; and having, without being forced to deprive her poor relations of their little fortune, contrived a way of discharging

them

them all, she went to her bankers; and . with the assistance of Ellis, who, as she was -tormented by the creditors, was delighted to have her lady's debts discharged, all Lady Jane owed was paid in three days time: and Lady Anne therefore knew, that as the deed was done, Mr. Percy could no longer oppose it, nor could he have any longer a plea to defer the marriage of Percy and Lady Jane.

"When Lady Anne had obtained all the receipts, she put them on a file; and going into Lady Jane's apartment, where she sat alone and musing over her miseries, she presented the file to her, and desired her to see what it held.—Lady Jane having surveyed it uttered a scream of surprise, but so mingled with delight that Lady Anne felt herself almost repaid j and while Lady Jane in an agony of gratitude,— gratitude composed of so many *mingled* feelings, that it amounted to pain,—hung

on on Lady Anne's neck, and called her her saviour and the preserver of Percy. Lady Anne's tears flowed as fast as hers did, but *words* she spoke *none*.

" Where, where is Percy ?" cried Lady Jane, " I must seek him."

" Do so," said Lady Anne, turning pale.

" But first tell me how you got money to pay these vile debts without disappointing your cousins of their little wealth, as well as yourself of the jewels."

" By altering my plans for the next year and half at least. Instead of taking a house with Mrs. Tyrawley as my chaperone, and living up to my income and my rank, T shall take a small house, retaining Mrs. Corbet to reside with me; for, to be honest, the money I have paid for you is the greater part of my income for the ensuing year, which my bankers

advanced on my paving them interest for the money."

" O Anne ! your goodness overpowers me. And for our sake you give up all that other women value!"

" No, Jane, not so. In making those I love happy, I secure to myself what, in my eyes, is of more value than a splendid establishment. Nor should I thus point out to you the extent of what you will think privations to me, if I did not wish to teach you, that the generosity built on self-denial is the only true and valuable generosity, and to lead you to follow while you applaud my example."

To this well-meant hint Lady Jane replied only by a shake of the head and a deep sigh, and went in search of Percy, whom she found brooding over his imagined danger, and making his agonies worse by dwelling on them. But in the

next next moment he was lifted from the depth of despondence to the height of hope and happiness! Yet still his joy was damped by the consciousness of the sacrifice which Lady Anne had made, and he more bitterly deplored than ever his own early extravagance, which had made it impossible for him to raise the money ne. cessary to remove the embarrassments of Lady Jane.

*' Best of women!" cried Percy, when he heard what Lady Anne had done, ** how can we ever repay her? Yes, dearest Jane! yes, we *can* repay her," added he tenderly : " payment *is* in our power—Let her see us happy, and her generous nature will be amply repaid."

" And do you think we *shall not* be happy, Harry? Have your father's prejudices infected you ?".

F 2 " How

" How can you think so, Jane?" replied Percy blushing. " If they had, do you imagine 1 could thus rejoice in the prospect of being united to you ? But let us talk of your cousin:—This voluntary kindness of hers in order to insure or expedite our union rejoices me also on her own account; for it convinces me she has not that regard for me which you and my father feared she had ; for I am sure, from my own feelings, that no man or woman in love could endeavour to facilitate the union of the beloved object with another. I am sure I could not have done all in my power, Jane, to marry you to the *nabob.'"*

" Nor I, Harry, to many you to Lady Anne, but—"

" But what ?"

" Oh, nothing," replied Lady Jane. " But," she was going to say, ** though

we ue are not, Anne *is* capable of such a sa-. crifice." Knowing how, *ever how* enthusiastic an admirer Harry Percy was of acts of superior virtue, she could not bear, on second thoughts, to let him learn the whole extent of Lady Anne's superiority.

" Now, Jane," said he, " I must leave you, and go to the House, even without seeing Lady Anne to thank her for her goodness; and do you return, and tell her that she must put the finishing stroke tp it by breaking what she has done to my father, and prevailing on him to put matters in train for our speedy union."

" I will," replied Lady Jane. Then saying to herself, " O poor Lady Anne!" she, almost reluctantly, returned to her cousin.

" I will go to him instantly,"" said Lady Anne in reply, well knowing that when

efforts efforts are to be made they ought not to be long reflected upon; and hearing Mr. Percy was in his library, she ventured to join him there. Surprise, disappointment, indignation, and regret, were Mr. Percy's first feelings, on hearing what Lady Anne had to communicate, mixed with admi■ ration of her own generous self.command, since, more

quick.sighted than his son to the state of Lady Anne's feelings, he knew and could appreciate the greatness of her conduct.

"Butthis*isrobbery,* downright *robben/,* Lady Anne," he said at last, " for years must elapse before either Percy or I can ever repay you."

** And suppose I am never repaid," cried Lady Anne, " there will be no great harm—for, *indeed,* I can do without the money:" and afraid lest Mr. Percy should know that she had already made

some some sacrifices, and must make stilt greater, she changed the conversation, and earnestly preferred her petition that preparations for the marriage might take place without delay. Mr. Percy looked at her with feelings of affectionate esteem and admiration, but dared not express his admiration, lest she should suspect why he so much admired,. and by that means discover that the secret of her heart was known to him. . . .

" Lady Anne," replied he, " as it is your wish, your request, 1 will do all. in my power to expedite this, in my eyes, illstarred union; for you have acquired a right to be alone consulted, and I will do for your dear sake, what I positively assure you I would do to oblige no one elseBut I tell you honestly I do not approve. this marriage, and 1 never never will say that 1 do." And Lady Anne thinking it

politic: politic to be contented with this ungracious assent, as opposition might have rendered it still more so, thanked him even warmly for his promise, and retired to impart the news to Lady Jane.—Though, in the first instance, Lady Anne's bounty was the result of pure, disinterested benevolence; Still, upon a selfish principle of consideration for her own feelings, the conduct she pursued was the best possible in order to support her under the downfall of all her hopes; for sweet and consoling to her was the consciousness of her own heroism ; and that feeling of hopeless love, which, if suffered to remain in quiet inactivity, would have preyed on her health, perhaps, and destroyed the energies of her mind, by being forced into action and exertion in the cause of the beloved object, served as a balm to the wounds it had inflicted, and enabled her even to witness

ness with composure the ceremony which gave the man of her affections to her envied rival.

" He is my gift," said she mentally : " but for me, she might never have called him hers; and *if* he is happy, / too shall have been the *means* of his *happiness." "'* Still, Lady Anne,as she stood at the altar, was very glad of the assistance of the long white veil which she wore, to conceal the conscious fluctuations of her complexion. Nor did she raise her veil even to receive the parting kiss of the bride, who with her husband set off from the church-door oa a tour of some weeks; but she contented herself with folding Lady Jane in an af-' fectionate embrace, and receiving without returning the pressure of Percy's hand.

Lady Anne therefore succeeded in concealing her deep emotion from every eye *F 3* save save that of Mr. Percy, and to him her feelings were sacred and inviolable.

" Shall we take a drive into the country, Lady Anne;" said he, after handing her and Mrs. Corbet into the carriage.

" If you please, sir," replied Lady Anne, while through her veil the deadly paleness of her cheek was visible, which *certainty* no longer bore that *full unvarying* colour with which Percy had re*proached* it.

Mr. Percy, conscious how great the effort Lady Anne had made that morning, was alarmed at her excessive paleness, and the sort of desperate calmness and stillness of her manner:—still, delicacy forbade him to take notice of it, and Mrs. Corbet was one of those persons who look without seeing. At length, Mr. Percy, who was well acquainted with the human heart, fixed on a method likely to rouse

Lady

Lady Anne from her distressing state of quietude, by calling forth the generous indignation of her nature, and he exclaimed—

" O Lady Anne, married. as my son is,. my only son, to a woman of high rank, tolerable fortune, and of great beauty and accomplishments,. I must own that my heart, my father's. heart, is not as well satisfied as it hoped to be on this occasion. I cannot,. excuse me, dear Lady Anne, L cannot think your cousin calculated. to• make him happy." . .

" Sir, Mr. Percy!" returned Lady Anne vehemently,. indignation bringing back the full tide of crimson to her face,, "you surely, sir, forget we are not

alone!"

" No, I. do not," he replied, 'e and indeed it is next to being alone; for, if. you. look at Mrs. Corbet, you will see that she is attending to nothing but the pretty shops, and pretty men and women."

« Still,

" Still, sir, I must beg you, if you must say any thing so painful to my feelings,. and so unjust at the same time, I must beg, I say, that it may be kept for my private ear."

" Unjust! Well then, if our good friend: has heard the accusation, pray let her hear the exculpation, and explain why I am unjust."

" With all ray heart r I am convinced that Lady Jane is taught by past experience, and that the agony she has suffered on my account will be such as to make her very cautious how she errs in future. Besides, she has strong affections, she loves her husband, and she will love her children, and do her duty by them."

" No, Lady Anne, no; she may love her children, but you will be their mother."

" Oh, most gladly !" cried Lady Anner hut recollecting herself, she added rather

angrily, angrily, " I must again remind you that this way of mentioning Lady Jane is unpleasant to me."

" Well then, forgive me," said he;, taking her hand, which had no longer the deadly cold feeling that had alarmed him, " forgive me, and let me talk to you of my plans, and consult with you about yours. Now you will have an establishment of your own, and Lady Jane is married, you know it is my intention to dispose of my large house, and take a small one; for my income from my West India estates has fallen off greatly, and I wish to contract my expenses: besides, I shall never be easy till you, Lady Anne, are repaid."

" No more on that subject, sir," said Lady Anne coldly, " or you will offend me again."

" Well—well—I shall think, however,

of of it as much as I please- The Duke of

L has offered me a large sum for ir,

and I mean to accept it.. Poor man! he would fain have a mistress for it, and I believe he will very soon renew certain offers."

" I hope not," replied Lady Anne*;* ** for, though I highly admire the Duke, my determination on that subject is irrevocable."

" Forgive me—I will proceed on business. I have heard of a small house sear my son's in Piccadilly, and there I mean to reside. And now, Lady Anne, in what part of the town, and in what fine house, do you mean to take up your residence? for I flatter myself that 1 shall have the satisfaction of seeing my old friend's daughter, and I may say the pride of my heart, living in a style worthy her rank and fortune."

" Some

" Some time hence you willy I trust,'[5]" replied Lady Anne deeply blushing, " but not yet."

" Not yet ?—What do you mean ?"

'* I mean that for a year or two I shall! be contented to live in a small house in■ the vicinity of Percy and Lady Jane, and with a small establishment, and Mrs. Corbet has promised to live with me."

" I understand it—I understand you,. Lady Anne, and I see very clearly that your bounty to your extravagant cousin is the cause of this, and I shudder to think of the extent of her involvements; for I concluded till now,. that what I knew you to* possess of personal property was expended on her, and not any part of your income."

** There you wrong Lady Jane, sir," cried Lady Anne haughtily: " my personal property, great part of it I mean, has been expended in a still more satisfactory tory manner; and I earnestly beg that you will forbear to give even an opinion on my plans, as they are fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians."

" Yet one word more—Surely Percy and his bride will invite you to live with them?"

"O yes! they have done so—but I know better than to accede to such a proposal. Young married people ought to be left to themselves, and fix the way of life they are in future to follow."

" True, *very true*—but where is this small house to be found ?"

" In Clarges.street—and if you please we will go and look. at one that has been recommended to me—for I should wish to have your approbation of it."

Accordingly they drove to Clargesstreet; and Mr. Percy, though grieved at the smallness of the house, could not but own that it was large enough for Lady

Anne's,

Anne's, at present, reduced income; and with a heart more filled with reverence for her, and regret for his son's blindness, he parted with her on their return home,—

he to dine with the Duke of L , and

Lady Anne to spend the rest of the day in her own apartments.

As he foresaw, the Duke renewed his offers now Percy was married, but still in vain :—and in a short time Lady Anne and Mrs. Corbet took possession of their new abode. Mr. Percy went to lodgings till his was ready for him, and the Duke

of L went to the house in Grosvenor

square.

All these arrangements took place during the absence of the new-married pair, who at length returned to London to a very elegant house in Piccadilly. Percy looked, and evidently was, so happy that his fond father could not help viewing with complacency the woman who made

him him so, and Lady Jane had every reason to be satisfied with the reception he gave her. But the joy she felt was damped by the sight of Lady Anne, whose excessive thinness and paleness called forth all the anxieties of her affectionate heart;—and when she was alone with her she burst into tears, and asked if she had been ill.

" No—not ill," replied Lady Anne coldly, " and my paleness is only temporary :—time, by removing entirely the cause, will also remove the effect, and I assure you my mind is now quite at ease."

" I understand you," replied Lady Jane ; " but believe me, in the midst of my own happiness I shall be uneasy till I see your usually fine colour as bright as ever. And now, Anne, let us order the carriage and drive to your house." They did so, and Lady Jane could not see without remorse amounting to agony, the humble mansion comparatively to that she ought

to

to have inhabited, to which her errors nad doomed her cousin.

" Grieve not for what to me is *no* source of grief," replied Lady Anne; " but repay me, if you think you owe me obligations, by abstaining in future from the follies, not to say *vices,* which forced me to live here.—Alas! Jane, I have had more serious trials to bear, and I have borne them, I trust, well; nor of my *past* weakness, as I may *now* call it, is there I hope a *visible* trace left."

" I can assure you," said La iy Jane,. " that it was *never* suspected by Percy— but his father hinted to him his suspicions."

" His father! did *he* suspect ?"

" Yes:—but, like his son, he most probably has been convinced he was in an error by your recent conduct."

" My recent conduct 1"

" Yes:—Percy told me he was now quite convinced, by your making such efforts. forts to bring about our union, that you were not in love with him yourself—for, if you had, you could not have done what you did."

Lady Anne listened at firit in speechless. wonder.—" So then !" thought she, " the greatest proof of pure disinterested love I could .possibly give, he deemed a proof of the contrary !—Well, I *rejoice* though I *wonder* at his blindness!—And pray, Jane," said she, " what did you answer to this curious speech ?"

" I said that *1* could not have acted so to marry him to *you*—and there the conversation ended."

One morning some country cousins, accompanied by some London ladies, who were glad of an excuse for gratifying their own curiosity on pretence of gratifying that of their companions, called on the bride, and begged she would indulge her rural visitors with a sight of her wedding

presents presents and wedding finery ;—an J Lady Jane, ever obliging, indulged their wishes.

" And this," said Lady Jane, " was Mr. Percy's gift, and this my uncle Lord . 's;" and so she went on.

" But where is Lady Anne's ? she is so rich !" said a lady who disliked Lady Anne: ** she is so rich, that no doubt her present is the handsomest of any." And'while the conscious Lady Jane, who indeed knew the *magnificence* of *her* gift, blushed and hesitated, and would fain have been guilty of evasion, Lady Anne coldly replied, " Lady Jane has no gift of mine to show you."

" Dear me! how extraordinary!" cried one. " Aye, well—I suppose you save yourself for the christening gifts," said another; while all by looks and shrugs, and signs to each other, conveyed their astonishment at Lady Anne's meanness, .who having, instead of a fine house and . : large large establishment, settled herself in a quiet way in Clarges-street, had set many persons wondering and talking, and suspecting her of avarice ; and this declaration of hers confirmed the idea.

" Yes, yes," again said one, resuming the subject, " it is clear Lady Anne will make a most splendid christening offering!"

" Lady Anne has no such intention," she replied, distressed more at the pain Lady Jane suffered, than at their evident opinion of her meanness; and knowing Lady Jane, she every moment feared she would, to exculpate her, inculpate herself. Therefore she rose up and said, " I see clearly, ladies, what you now think of me, and you are welcome to laugh at my avarice as much as you please."

"Your avarice, Lady Anne!" cried Lady Jane, "you, the most generous "

** Be quiet, Lady Jane, not a word

more!

more ! and if you say one word further to vindicate me from censures which I despise, 1 shall look on it as a personal affront." Then, with a look which awed the company in spite of themselves, she left the room ; and Lady Jane, but for her cousin's prohibition, would undoubtedly have betrayed herself, and expatiated on Lady Anne's kindness.

" O Anne I" said she when they were gone, " the misery I felt at hearing yea blamed unjustly, was almost sufficient to expiate the error which occasioned it." Nor could she rest without telling Percy what had passed. But as he when he heard it exclaimed, " I am glad I was not present, for I should have affronted the women! What ! dare to degrade by their suspicions the exalted goodness which not one of them could imitate!" Lady Jane was almost sorry that she had been so communicative. *4*

If

If Lady Jane Langley was admired, Lady Jane Percy was adored.—Her name was given to every new and expensive fashion, and put at the top of dedications of numberless new works.—It figured also in the list of every public charity, it stood at the head of many a private one, and it every day adorned the columns of a fashionable paper. Lady Jane Percy at whole length, or in half, was exhibited in the gallery of each fashionable artist, and engravings of her were hung up in every print.shop ; while Percy enjoyed this publicity as a homage due to the idol of his heart, and as a proof of her transcendent charms ; for now she was his, he had too much generosity of nature, and too much confidence in her principles, to be jealous of her, and he looked forward to her approaching confinement as the only event wanting to complete his felicity*

That

That Lady Jane might have as little temptation as possible to ran in debt, Percy had settled on her an allowance which even Lady Jane herself felt to be generous to excess, therefore he had no suspicion of her being again distressed in a pecuniary way: and though the consciousness that whatever she wore became the ton immediately, led her to vary her dress almost every morning and every evening, it never occurred to him that this could not be done but at a great expense. And as, unfortunately for his wife, he was too close an attendant on his duty in the House to accompany her often into some certain circles, he was also unconscious that she

frequently entered into very deep play, and that the money solemnly destined in the morning to the payment of debts, and even to the purposes of charity, was lost in the evening in the intoxications of the gaming-table.

Lady Anne meanwhile was rarely her companion.—Resolved to see as little of Percy as possible, that the passion she believed extinct might run no danger of being revived, she seldom visited Lady Jane when he was at home; and after she had accompanied her to Court, and gone the round of bridal visits with her, she preferred staying at home with her books, her music, and her work, to the giddy round of balls and assemblies, to which, untired as yet, the admired Lady Jane resorted. But Lady Anne had yet *another* amusement, which she fancied rational and innocent at the same time; and that was, daily studying the debates, for the delight of reading Percy's speeches: and while his thoughtless wife took no interest in his excelling eloquence, except when she heard it the theme of commendation from those whose praise was fame, Lady Anne knew every sentence tence that had commanded admiration, and was aware of every new motion which he was either to propose or second. Alas! while making him thus the occupier of her lone y hours, the Percy whom she beheld in imagination only, was more likely to be dangerous to her fancied freedom than he could have been, beheld in reality; for, deprive any beloved object of the charms which our own imagination gives it, and love would soon be our slave, and never again our tyrant.

At length Lady Jane became the mother of twins, and the delighted Lady Anne pressed to her kind bosom two sons of Percy's. But it was not without deep regret, which was shared by their mother, that Lady Anne heard her cousin forbidden, on account of the delicacy of her health, to be a nurse to her children, and was forced to see them fed by other care than the maternal one.

As soon as Lady Jane was able to go out again, Lady Anne, who had during her cousin's confinement seen more of Percy than she thought proper, returned to her own home, and her salutary occupations. But she was soon to have her peace disturbed by pangs of the sincerest sorrow and

regret—pangs which continued to be felt by her, after Lady Jane and even Percy had ceased to feel them. Mr. Percy *did* live to see his son's sons, and to kiss with tears of pleasure the cheek of their happy mother: but he did not survive the birth of the heirs more than six weeks; and though apparently in perfect health, he died suddenly when getting ofF his horse, a victim as it appeared to some disease of the heart. As Percy equally loved and honoured his father, his grief at first was overwhelmingly severe; andLady Jane, though more relieved than affected by Mr. Percy's loss, shut herself up at home, contented

tented to support her husband by her presence and soothincr fondness under the via.

O

lence of his sorro w ; and Lady Anne, spite of herself, was forced to ccme to the house of mourning, to alleviate Percy's grief by the evident sincerity with which she shared in it.

" You may well weep, dear Anne," said Lady Jane, " for he loved, he adored you above all women; and you will miss the pleasure of praise from lips from which approbation was honour!"

Lady Anne made no reply, for she felt that it was not natural for Lady Jane to deplore Mr. Percy's death as much as she did, and she honoured her integrity in not feigning what she did not feel. But Lady Anne only too soon learnt to deplore Mr. Percy's sudden and untimely decease, on Lady Jane's account as well as her own, for she soon saw that he had been a check on Lady Jane's thoughtless expenditure.

As

.As soon as propriety warranted her return into the gay world, Lady Jane, presuming on the addition to their income which Mr. Percy's death occasioned, and unawed by the dread of his reproofs, launched forth into greater expenses than ever, and gave entertainments of almost eastern magnificence.—Even Percy himself became alarmed; and as soon as Lady Jane found that,if informed of any intended decoration for an evening's fete, Percy positively and peremptorily forbade them, she got into a habit of giving her orders without consulting him ; and when he expostulated, she always assured him that these decorations were only for effect, and

that they really cost nothing worth mentioning: an assurance which she believed true, because, as she never looked at the bills, she was not aware how great was her extravagance. It was for the interest of his happiness that Percy should believe her

statement, statement, and he *did* believe it; while Lady Anne, awakened to anxious alarm, felt consoled for the removal of Mr. Percy, by the sad conviction that a scene must soon be unfolded which would have filled him with sorrow and indignation. Afraid to speak, yet scarcely able to remain silent, Lady Anne then fore, whose lease of her house was now nearly expired, was no longer averse to reside with Percy and Lady Jane, for a short time at least, that she might be thereby enabled to have the means of judging accurately of what was passing, and she promised to remove to Piccadilly as soon as the term for which her house was taken had actually expired.

One morning that Lady Jane was to call on Lady Anne to go out with her on business, she arrived while the latter was engaged with her solicitor, and accordingly chose to wait in a small room on the ground.floor. In this room Lady Jane

found found a poor woman shabbily clothed, and her whole person and appearance indicative of poverty and distress. To the misery which she *beheld*, Lady Jane's heart was always vulnerable; and after surveying the poor woman at first in compassionate. silence, she at length asked the cause of her evident unhappiness.

" O madam," she replied, " I am so wretched, and it is all along of a great rich lady who won't pay us our due, and so we fear we must go to the workhouse: but, indeed, my Sam says he won't go there, but will run away and list for a sojer first, and then what is to become of me and my poor baby !"

" You shall not go to the workhouse, I promise you that," said Lady Jane. " But who is this lady that will not pay you your just debt? Surely, if she knew of your distress, she would ! It cannot be, the lady of this house!"

"She!

** She! No, God bless her! But, howsomever, there is no need to name names and make hinnemies, you know; and if so be as she pay me at last,

it is all very well, though to be sure as how I ha'n't slept for many a night from the thought of Sam's listing."

" Poor creature!" said Lady Jane affectionately. " But Sam shall *not* list, I'll take care of that. But what is the debt ?" " O, madam, it is only 50/." " No more?"

" Oh, and enough too for us poor folks to miss it. You see as how, madam, my husband work at a builder's, and this great lady wanted to have a tempry building run up for one of her feats; but she grudged the money belike which my husband's master charged, and sure enough it was a great charge ! So what does my poor Sam do to turn a penny, but he follows the lady's agent out and G 5 says,

says, says he, * I would engage to do that job for much less." * Would you?' says she; and accordingly Sam was employed : but by the time he had got the materials and all that, the job came to 50/., and he still was paid little or nothing for his trouble. Howsomever, the lady liked what he did; though, after all, she never paid for it, and I never, no never, could get to the speech of her during this whole year."

" But has the lady no husband ? If she has, why not send the bill to him?"

" Oh, because she don't like her husband to know of her bills; and so her maid take 'em, and keep them for fear the master get hold of them ; and so I can't get paid, and we must go to a workhouse, and Sam for a sojer; not to mention a bad fever in the workhouse, and I am afflicted with a lungs cough."

" How.dreadfully unprincipled this lady must be!" said Lady Jane. " But here,

good good woman, though I can but ill spare it, here are 20/. towards the *501*. and I dare say Lady Anne will give the rest."

The poor woman was so overjoyed that she could scarcely speak her thanks : at length she said— *

" But, dear lady, if the great lady will pay us our right, we need not take any from Lady Anne and you; and I came here, because they said she had such tie like over her, that she mayhap could prevail on her to pay us."

" How !" exclaimed Lady Jane, turning pale, " has Lady Anne such influence over the lady? What is your name?".

** Sarah Boddam."

" And the lady herself ? answer me, I conjure you. Is it Lady Jane Percy ?"

That's she " sure enough." And Lady Jane, conscience-stricken, sunk into a chair and hid her face in her hands.

"Dear

" Dear me! what is the matter?" cried the poor woman approaching her. At this moment Lady Anne entered; and surprised to see Lady Jane at all, as she had not been announced, and especially in that room, she was still more surprised to see her in evident agitation, and the poor woman in evident confusion.

" What does this mean?" cried Lady Anne. " Speak to me, dear Jane, and tell me what has happened : is your husband, is Percy ill *I"*

The names of Jane and Percy showed the poor woman to whom she had been talking, and of whom complaining; and frightened in the highest degree, she laid down the twenty pound notes which she had now, she thought, little prospect of keeping, and was running out of the room, when Lady Jane exclaimed—

" Stay, I desire you: stay where you

are. are. Anne," she added, " dear Anne, despise me if you will, but pay my debt to that poor wronged woman."

" Oh dear, my lady, I am sure, my lady, I did not think, and I can't think —"

" Be silent, woman," cried Lady Anne roughly, " and let one of you at least speak to be understood."

While Lady Anne was thus speaking, Barnes came eagerly into the room, saying to Lady Jane, "Oh, my lady, Mrs. Ellis has sent your new court dress after you,

which Miss has sent home to know if

she shall put more point and silver fringe on it?" and as she spoke she displayed the costly dress in all its extravagant beauty. Lady Anne, turning round, fixed her expressive eyes on the humbled and penitent Lady Jane, then said—

" Has your ladyship any fresh orders to give ?"

″ No, no—lay f,he dress down, Barnes,

I will I will call and speak about it," replied Lady Jane; while the poor woman, gazing with surprise at splendour such as she had never seen before, wondered no longer that Lady Jane could not pay her bills.

" To be as concise as possible, Lady Anne," said Lady Jane in a voice of suppressed agitation, " that poor woman and her husband have been driven to the greatest distress, and to the prospect of a workhouse, by my not paying them a bill of 50/. Pay it, and save me from their curses and my own!"

" Oh dear! my lady, I am sure I should not have cursed you, my lady."

" Peace, woman ! I tell you," cried Lady Anne angrily. " We ought to curse no one:—still,I could almost forgive the sufferers by the vices of the *Great*, as they call the rich and the noble, and as we call ourselves, if, in the bitterness of their hearts, they *did* curse the thoughtless extravagance travagance which, itself unchastised, drives them often to a workhouse and a prison."

" You are severe, Anne."

" May be, but I am just."

" Dear me, my lady!" again observed Mrs. Boddam, " the lady looks so sorry and so ashamed that I could not have the heart to—"

" Must I again desire to hear none of your remarks ? They fret me beyond my patience. Here, I will write you a draft on my banker for the money directly. There—take it, and begone!" And while the terrified woman, with a thousand curtsies and thanks, and even tears of joy, came up to Lady Anne to receive the draft, Lady Jane said, " Really, Anne, your words are so rough, and your manner so violent, you alarm the poor woman."

" My words are rough, but my actions kind," she replied. "Your words are

kind, kind, but your actions cruel. I wonder which, in the eyes of God or man, is the more estimable."

The conscious Lady Jane did not attempt to reply.

The good woman waited till Lady Anne had done speaking, to make her last curtsy; to which Lady Anne replied by a kind nod of the head : then calling after her, she said—

" Be sure to tell the servant to write down where you are to be found, in case I wish to inquire after you."

Mrs. Boddam, whose fear of Lady Anne had not power to overcome her gratitude, turned on her eyes so full of joy and grateful emotion, that Lady Anne, too much affected to speak, again nodded adieu, and shutting the door returned to the wretched and self-convicted Lady Jane, who relieved her feelings a little, by

relating

relating to Lady Anne the whole of what had passed while Lady Anne was preparing for the projected drive.

" Well, Jane," said Lady Anne, kindly forbearing to dwell on the repented fault,

" shall we go first to Miss 's about the

dress?"

"Name it not," cried Lady Jane, "I shall never be able to bear the sight of it again, and if I go it shall only be to beg *her* to dispose of it.—I cannot, *indeed* I cannot, incur the guilt of buying it now, or rather of running in debt for it;—and I know Lady Laurel would gladly purchase it."

" If you really *wish* to part with it," said Lady Anne kindly, " you need not wait Lady Laurel's decision,—for / wili purchase it."

" You ! Anne, you!"

" Yesr—I;—for I mean to go to court on the birth.day."

" But " But it will be too *short* for you !" " Oh! Barnes can lengthen it. There. fore, if you are in earnest, the dress is mine, and shall be paid for today ; and if you think more point and silver necessary, you shall give your orders accordingly, for I wish to have it as handsome as it can be made."

. " If I am in earnest! To be sure I am r —and I, yes I, will go in an old dress." And the sigh she gave while speaking these words sufficiently proved that she felt the sacrifice she was making.—Lady Anne kindly praised her resolution, and

they set off for Miss 's; where such

additions were made to the dress as Lady Jane recommended, and Lady Anne, seemingly delighted with her purchase, returned home in unusual spirits.

At length the birth-day arrived ; and Lady Jane, having made an old courtdress as smart as she could, was preparing

to

to put it on ; when Lady Anne, dressed in a simple white crape with a while satin train, and all its ornaments pearls and white roses, entered her apartment, ready for court, and, dismissing Ellis, spoke to the astonished Lady Jane as follows :— " I have tried your resolution, dearest Jane, on a point in which it has usually been most vulnerable, and I have seen with delight that it has stood the trial nobly.—You have now for ONCE practised the virtue of self-denial, and I flatter myself that the pleasure which has been the result to you from the consciousness of your firmness will tempt you to the exertion of similar forbearance in future.— But as all virtue is the more stable, I believe, for being propped with rewards and praises, I must tell you I never thought of purchasing the dress for myself, but as a present for you, and you

will will see it lying on your own bed ready to be put on."

Perhaps Lady Jane had never known a much happier moment! She, even she, had earned the most rich and beautiful dress she had ever fancied, by an act of self denial:—But, in a different way, Lady Anne was as much pleased as Lady Jane;—and it was with hearts full of renewed and even strengthened affection towards each other that they proceeded to St.

James's. But, alas! all Lady Jane's good feelings were evanescent, and her repentance only bloomed like the gum cistus, that sheds its leaves almost as soon as they are blown, and Lady Anne's hopes of her amendment were again blighted.

Yes—Mr. Percy was indeed a restraint on the extravagance of Lady Jane -.—and she proved that he had been so, by prevailing on her indulgent husband

to

to make great and unnecessary alterations in the seat belonging to the family, as soon as his father's death made him possessor of that venerable mansion.—Percy thought, indeed, that the house which had suited his noble and exemplary mother might have satisfied the pride and the taste of his wife; but the yieldingness of his temper, assisted by the natural indolence of his disposition, and that unuttered but conscious sentiment which I believe has ruined many wives, " any thing for a quiet life," made Percy submit to what he did not approve. And in a short time after Mr. Percy was no more, the house at Percy Park was filled with workmen, who were going to modernize entirely that side of it which commanded the south-west, and a beautiful plain watered by a meandering stream, which stream was now to roll along a widely spreading river5 but the other side, which looked

on on rocks and mountains, and frowned in castellated grandeur, was allowed to retain its gloomy antiquity.

" Yes, Anne," said Lady Jane to her cousin, who was alarmed at the idea of these changes, both from principle and taste, " you need not fear;. I mean to keep the grand, but add the agreeable: —in short, I mean that one side of my house should resemble *you*, and the other *me*. Agreeable in every sense of the word will I endeavour to render my mansion both inside and out; books, statues, paintings, gems, and medals shall crowd the modern part of the edifice;—and here

shall

from the mould to conscious being start

Those finer forms, the miracles of art j
Here chosen gems imprest on sulphur shine,
That slept for ages in a second mine j

and here—

i its warmest hues the pencil-flings,

Lo ! here the lost restores, the absent brings,

And And still the few best loved, and most revered, Rise round the board their social smile endear'd,"

added Lady Jane, leading Lady Anne to the dining-room, which was already hung with portraits by the first artists. " Now follow me to the library," she exclaimed. " Here shall I,

while the shaded lamp's mild lustre streams,

Read ancient books, or woe-inspiring dreams;
And, when a sage's bust arrests me here,
Pause, and his features with his thoughts compare.
Ah ! most that art my grateful rapture calls
Which breathes a soul into the silent walls,
Which gathers round the will of every tongue,
All on whose words departed nations hung,
Still prompt to charm with many a converse sweet,
Guides in the world, companions in retreat*."

" Well, but, dear Jane," observed Lady Anne, " could you not have dined in the dining-room as it was before, and having your friends around you, without these

* In all the lines quoted by Lady Jane on this occasion, see " Rogers's Epistle to a Friend."

expensive expensive alterations ? Could you not have read in the study such as our dear guardian left it?"

" Why to be sure I could, when hungry, eat in a room however ugly ; when studious, I could read in a library however untastily fitted up: but no rooms are the worse for being fashioned by the hand of Taste."

" No ; the rooms, Jane, will not be the worse, but their owners may; for Taste is always followed by its evil genius * Expense.'"

" Its evil genius, Anne ? No, not so, when wealth and power warrant its attendance on Taste."

" True, but "

" Nay, nay—no buts, most beautiful Mentor! for, remember, in all that I am now doing I have my husband's approbation." . .

This was indeed true, and Percy was

charmed charmed and gratified when he beheld the result of Lady Jane's creative taste ; while even Lady Anne smiled with admiring wonder, as she surveyed the beauties it had imparted, when all the decorations were completely finished. But neither Lady Anne nor Percy continued to smile when the bills came in, and Lady Jane herself was startled and alarmed when she found that" the expenditure was more than double the estimate! Nor did the expense stop there. As Lady Jane had contrived a music-room, she must have concerts ; and during the four months which they passed at Percy Park, musical professors must be there as their guests. As she had erected a room which could be converted into a private theatre, she must have private theatricals ; and Percy found that, whether in town or country, expenditure of a most enormous nature attended him from night till morning, as the Furies vow i. H on on the persecuted Orestes. Siill he was not much distressed, because he knew that his income was equal to all his apparent expenses: but had he been aware that Lady Jane's expenses which he did not know, were equal to those with which he was acquainted, he would indeed have lost all peace of mind, and have been roused to exertions of authority, which would have checked, though they would not probably have cured, her thoughtless extravagance. Still, though Percy did not find in the country the retirement which he.sought, he loved the months which he passed at Percy Park, because he had there more enjoyment of his wife's and children's society $ for Lady Jane, though she could not give up the dear delight of reigning as mistress of the revels in the country, and displaying her fine taste in festal decorations, had the good feeling and the grateful affection,

whatever \vhatevcr guests she had at her house, to devote her whole mornings to her husband : and all the hours which intervened From the time when she rose to that when she retired to dress for dinner, she spent in walking, riding, driving, or reading with Percy.

At length Lady Anne, having been seduced by the love, almost maternal, which she began to feel for the children, and by the hope of being some restraint on the errors of Lady Jane, to consent finally to become their guest for some months at least, was, when those months were at an end, persuaded to stay still longer. But though the first months of her stay with them were pleasant, she soon found that the ensuing ones would make her continued residence not only painful, but improper: it was also soon evident to her that Lady Jane was not only unhappy, but that something weighed heavily on her mind ; - .*T*. H 2 and

and she could not but attribute it to her being again deeply involved in debt, from which she was resolved that she would not even attempt to free her. Besides, like all persons displeased with *themselves,* Lady Jane was captious and irascible with *others ;* and very often, when Lady Anne had not the remotest idea of adverting to such a subject, she would accuse her of reproaching her with the obligations she had conferred on her. But it was not the pains so much as the pleasures of residing under her cousin's roof, that determined the conscientious Lady Anne to quit it. Percy, since Lady Anne became their guest, had found her conversation so pleasant, and was so gratified by the evident interest which she took in his success as an orator, and the every day increasing fame which he acquired, that, instead of accompanying Lady Jane to dinner parties, he more than onee preferred dining at home:

with Lady Anne (who rarely dined out) and his little boys, who, now three years old, were permitted to dine at table with their mamma Anne, or rather ate *their supper* while she dined: and it was always very reluctantly that Percy left his home, thus rendered agreeable to him in a more domestic way than it had lately been by Lady Jane, even to repair to the House, and pursue the line of life which he so warmly loved.

Nor was it long before Lady Jane became alarmed at the evidentdehght he took, in her cousin's society; for her good sense taught her that beauty, and even that power of attraction which Percy denominated charm, must lose its influence by custom over any husband however fond, unless its sway be maintained by solid and superior qualities of mind and heart, which, like pure gold on which enamel has been worked, retain their value when the enamel is worn away. She was only conscious that, if compared to Lady Anne, she must shine with diminished lustre in Percy's eyes; and she was also conscious that, though enamel might very well represent *her,* Lady Anne was better designated by sterling gold. Besides, she thought, and justly too, that Lady Anne, if conscious that she pleased, would in rime study to be pleasing j and Percy himself had said, that if Lady Anne would but condescend to be agreeable, she would be irresistible—"and alas!" cried Lady Jane, " have I not obscured all my graces in the eyes of my husband, by errors which not even the most partial fondness can excuse ?"

While these saddening thoughts were passing in Lady Jane's mind, Lady Anne was calling herself to a strict account for' the delight her thoughts afforded her; She could not but feel, and the conscious

; ness ness was delightful to her, that Percy took greater pleasure in her society than in that of any one, and this she considered as an injury to Lady Jane.-r-" Well then, it shall, it must be relinquished," thought Lady Anne: but aware that, if she lived in London, he would be perhaps her most frequent visitor, she resolved to give up all idea of fixing her future establish^ mentin London, and secretly gave orders to have a fine old castle in Wales, which she inherited in right of her mother, got ready for her reception. " Again," said she to herself, " the hall of my fathers shall resound to the loud welcome of hospitality, and the harp shall awaken the echoes of its walls:" but she sighed to think that she must leave the lovely children behind her: might she be permitted to take the little Harry Percy with her, she should be contented; nay more, she would be happy ! But she still kept her plans un$_r$

revealed, revealed, lest she should be exposed to solicitations to alter them, which, as she knew they would be unavailing, it would be irksome to her to hear. .

In the meantime Lady Jane continued to run her giddy career, while, though she still was the object of Percy's love, she every day diminished in his esteem. One day, while Lady Anne was sitting with Lady Jane in her dressing-room, Percy came in with an air and manner considerably agitated; and while Lady Jane with a wife's conscious right could ask what had so evidently disturbed him, Lady Anne, though equally anxious, could only dare to look the anxiety which she felt.

"Do *you* ask what *ails* me, Jane?" said Percy. " Then I will tell you; but I already feel that I am a fool to be so disturbed : the truth is, that I came suddenly upon your maid Ellis, as she was reading a long paper which I took for a bill, and. " which,

which, seeing me, she tried in great confusion to put in her pocket. Alarmed at this, and rendered suspicious by former occurrences, I sternly demanded what it was she was so eager to conceal ? on which, she blushing and stammering replied, ' Sir, it is, sir, a letter from a young man

who is with the armies:' and I let her depart unquestioned further: but she might or she might *not* speak truth: however, I was willing to hope the *Jirst."* Here he paused, checked by the pale cheek, the downcast eye of his conscious wife.

" I know," said the equally alarmed Lady Anne, " that Ellis has a lover with the armies."

"Has she?" returned Percy eagerly. " Thank you ! God bless you for that assurance, kind Lady Anne \"

" I see you are very suspicious now, Percy," said Lady Jane faintly.'

>V ·:H *S' "' '* .*But

-" " But still,dear Jane, tell me if I have not an excuse for being so.—O believe me, to be able to confide implicitly in your prudence is the dearest wish of my soul j and I do, indeed I do, frequently repeat to myself —* No, let me not distrust her; she cannot be so cruel, she cannot be so base or so ungrateful to her noble-minded cousin, to go on as she formerly did; she loves me too well, and Lady Anne too well; nor could she bear to run even the risk,

which she would do, of losing "

" Of losing what?" asked Lady Jane. ** Of losing me and my affections for ever; for were you, best beloved of my heart as you now are, to involve yourself, and consequently me, in pecuniary embarrassments again, I would, though my heart bled with pity and tenderness at every pore, I would cease to live with you,

and separate from you for ever !" .

So

So saying, pale and agitated as Lady. Jane herself, he suddenly and hastily left the room.

" Then I am lost!" . cried Lady Jane, throwing herself back on a sofa, and clasping her hands in agony. . ., . . ,,

"Lost! say you?" exclaimed Lady Anne with more indignation than teaderness> " can it indeed be true that you have deserved the sad penalty which your husband has threatened you with ? "

" It is indeed true," she replied, " that I have incurred fresh debts; and unless you can and will assist me," she added with an agony of tears, and catching Lady Anne's hand, " you will soon see Percy wretched, and me not only an outcast from his affec$_{r}$ tions but his roof." ,

Lady Anne indignantly withdrew her hand, regarding her guilty cousin with looks of angry contempt. Lady Jane felt them to the bottom of her heart ; while

pride, and that pettishness the result of conscious degradation, prompted her to reply.

" Well, Lady Anne, if nothing less than my being punished for my faults by the loss of my husband's love and protection will satisfy your rigid ideas of retributive justice, be it so.—Yet I would advise your ladyship to scrutinize accurately your own motives for this rejection of the prayer of my misery. Take care lest it be because the idea of my losing the heart of Percy is an agreeable one to your imagination, and therefore you wish it to be realized."

" Fallen as you were before in my esteem," replied Lady Anne with one of her most haughty and contemptuous looks, " this speech has sunk you still lower: but I am not to be frightened, by the dread of incurring your mean suspicions, into an action. which my judgement may condemn;

nor

nor can any consideration for myself, Lady Jane, impel me to what I look upon. as wrong conduct. Had you, madam, endeavoured to move my feelings by picturing to me your own probable misery, and the anguish of your husband when your unworthiness shall be made known to him, you would have succeeded better."

Long before Lady Anne had done speaking, the self.judged Lady Jane had felt every sensation, of pride vanish into humility almost amounting to abjectness ; and when she had finished speaking she sunk on her knees before her justly offended cousin, and begged her to forgive the petulance of a self-convicted and desperate woman.

" And is it the envied wife of Percy .whom I behold thus desperate and thus degraded!" thought Lady Anne: "she, who might have been the happiest of the happy... ..! ..' ". .. ■} . .*K* .. .*'* ■ 1. rt Rise,

"Rise,LadyJane,"saidLadyAnne,"Ror add such base self-humiliation to the faults already committed. Your present words, your looks, are more calculated certainly to affect me than your former ones, and have almost conquered my repugnance to squander on you, and the payment of the debts of extravagant profligacy, the money which would, either lent or given to honest industrious tradesmen, have saved them from ruin, or have laid the foundation of their future independence. O God of benevolence

and justice," she added, clasping her hands and raising her eyes to heaven, " how can I answer to thee this waste of thy indulgent bounty 1"

" Is there no ruin," answeredLady Jane, (who, like *all persons accustomed to be in debt and to borrow money, had lost all feelings of delicacy,) " is there no ruin but ruin in trade that it would be virtue to prevent ? Is not the ruin of a friend's *.. ..; " peace peace of mind, of a relation's fair fame, entitled to equal if not superior consi. deration ? Can you without horror re. collect the dreadful state of agitation in which your and my beloved Percy left the room, only on the bare *suggestion* of what will soon be a reality ? Can you bear to dwell on the image of this house deprived of its mistress by the publication of her errors? and Percy of the wife who, perhaps, even spite of her faults, he may cherish in the recesses of his heart ? Can you bear to fancy me, your once loved Jane, the companion of your youth, wearing away the rest of life in retirement, which the pangs of conscious degradation will forbid me either to enjoy, or to improve ; while I every day undermine that life of misery, by having recourse to opiates to suspend my sense of suffering? Oh ! Lady Anne, if your timely assistance could prevent the realization of this pic'.. .■ ture. ture, would it not be as great an act of benevolence to afford it for that purpose, as to aid one tradesman or make the fortune of another ?"

Lady Anne shuddered while she listened to her; for she well knew that the picture now only the creature of imagination, might only too soon become a reality; and after communing with herself some time in silence, she at last said, " I have at this moment in my banker's hands a pretty considerable sum: it was destined for other purposes: but if this sum can be of .use in removing your embarrassments, and preserving you and Percy from the horrors you have described and I foresee, it is at your service; but—" Here Lady Jane interrupted her by clamorous expressions of gratitude, and an embrace which Lady Anne as yet could not prevail on herself to return.

** Don't interrupt me," said Lady

Anne:

Anne: " I wish to tell you that *more* I cannot, *will* not do; and if you are ever involved again, you must take the consequences of your own actions,

and, however reluctantly, disclose all to your husband. My paternal estates are, you know, entailed on the male heir: but I have the fee of those which *I* derive from my mother ; and I can, if I choose, sell or do what I please with one of them: but this I will not do, for the sake of one very dear* to me. The elder of your twins, Lionel Percy, must be a¯ rich man, while the younger can only inherit a younger brother's fortune.—But as I positively shall never marry, I mean to adopt the little Harry, and for him preserve my landed property inviolate j I mean, with your and his father's approbation."

" Our approbation, Anne! And can you suppose that we shall withhold it, evea even at the risk of your one day changing your mind and marrying ?"

" Marrying ! No—that I shall never do. —Now let me tell you my plans: —instead ef having an establishment in London, it is my intention to reside, probably all the year round, at a castle I have in Wales, and I this day received a letter from my agent to say that it is ready for me ;—and I have also a letter from my relation Mrs. Tyrawley, telling me that she and her daughter will most gladly accept my invitation to live with me, and they will meet me at my new residence next week."

" Next week!" exclaimed Lady Jane: " ansf wilFyou indeed leave me, and so 60on?" while the consciousness that ere long she would require Lady Anne to stand between her and her husband's anger, shook her whole frame with evident emotion. ..: - . /(.... .* " I am

*f I am resolved," said Lady Anne: "a London life does not suit me: to me it is heartless all: and though I occasionally meet at your parties, and at others, such society as it is both instructive and honourable to be one of, still these happy evenings are the few, and insipid ones the many: but in my new abode I shall have rational pursuits, leisure to follow them, and active duties to fulfil; a numerous tenantry to make happy; and I shall be able to witness the happiness which I promote."

" But in the meanwhile you leave your adopted son!" !

w Aye, that will be a pang, but "

" But what ? would you have us resign him to you? "

" Oh ! mock me not with a thought so blissful!"

" Nay, Anne, whatever it costs me, if Percy will consent and you will go, the

little little Harry shall go with you:". and Lady Anne's heart being by this means softened towards her cousin, she threw herself on her neck and warmly articulated her thanks. Lady Anne, though she loved home, doted on Harry Percy, perhaps because his name was Harry, and she also saw in him a likeness of his father; and to be able, while avoiding on principle further association with the father, to recompense herself by being of use to the son, was an idea so full of exquisite enjoyment, that Lady Anne could not thank Lady Jane enough for having given it utterance, and promised to give it substance. :.

Not to dwell on this subject, in a few days all was ready for Lady Anne's departure, and Percy consented that little Harry should go with her, and be in future her adopted child ! But so great was the sorrow he expressed at the idea

of

of parting with Lady Anne as well as Harry, that Lady Jane could not help rejoicing, regardless of her own involvements, that she was going away.

At length the carnage, a new and handsome one, drawn by four horses, and attended by two outriders in the Mortimer livery, drew up to the door, followed by an elegant little phaeton with four posthorses ; and for the first time since she came of age the daughter of the Marquis

of D had an equipage suited to her

rank in life.

" Do, Jane," said Percy, " come to the window, and look at your cousin's new carriages. This is as it should be, Lady Anne. How pleased my poor father would have been to 6ee this day!"

This. speech, though not meant as such, Lady Jane could not help taking as a reproach to her, whose extravagance had caused Lady Anne's eeconomy, and instead >.. ' of

of going to the window she burst "into tears. But Percy, attributing her emotions to sorrow at parting with Lady Anne, and a consequent dislike to see the carriage which was to convey her away, sat down by her, and affectionately assured ber he sympathized with her most sincerely in her grief at losing her cousin. At this moment the little Harry was led in by his attendant; and Percy, with a quivering lip, took him in his arms and kissed his happy face, radiant with the expected delight of riding in a carriage along with dear mamma Anne. .

" Take him, he is yours, dear Lady Anne," said Percy, giving him to her arms; " and to no one less beloved, less .honoured, would I intrust a charge so precious."

Percy's manner was solemn, and Lady Anne caught its solemnity ; for, catching the child to her bosom, she raised her fine «yes as if calling on heaven to witness her

engagement engagement to do her utmost duty by the child so committed to her care, and bowed her head on his, in order to express the pleased acquiescence which she could not trust her voice to articulate. .

" Yes, dear Lady Anne," continued he, " the child is yours; and if you make him in any degree resemble you, he will be all a father's heart can

wish him."

" Come, let us go," said the child, interrupting the general silence of emotion,

Harry wants to go ride with mamma Anne."

4 " Little wretch!" said Lady Jane, " he is not at all sorry to leave me. Harry, are you not vexed to leave poor mamma Jane?"

" No, no—I like to go with mamma Anne: but we come again to see you, sfoa'n't we, Anne ?" . .. . . ■

" At least we hope mamma Jane will come and see us." ¸'...,

" Yes,

" Yes, yes—mamma Jane come to us. Good bye, Jane," holding up his pretty mouth to her.

Lady Jane clasped him in her arms, weeping even to sobbing as she did so.

'* We had better go and not prolong this painful scene," said Lady Anne, herself visibly affected; and having clasped her cousin in a long and affectionate embrace, she gave her hand to Percy, and in a short time found herself in the carriage ; while Percy, taking the child from his attendant's arms, kissed him for the last time, and, without uttering a word, saw the carriages drive off. That evening, Lady Jane's spirits were so depressed from the loss of her cousin and her child, that she gave up three engagements, and staid at home with her husband, in whose eyes she consequently looked more amiable than she had done for many months.

Lady Anne, meanwhile, was on her

journey

journey into Caernarvonshire, and much happier than she had been for some time. Percy had confided his child to her care, desiring her to make him all a father's heart could wish by *making him like herself;* and Lady Anne could not help giving herself up to all the delight this idea occasioned her. Lady Anne, when she approached Green Rock, the name of her castle, found that she had judged right in coming to it with a splendid

equipage, as her tenants would have been disappointed if she had done otherwise; for they all came out to meet her in their best apparel, to welcome her to the abode of her ancestors. Mrs. Tyrawley and her daughter were waiting also to receive her; and what with the pleasure and gratitude they expressed at being invited to live under her roof, the delight of the child at the horses and their riders, and the harpVOL. *u* I . ers

ers raising the strain of welcome in the grand hall of entrance, the beauty of the country, and the fineness of the weather, Lady Anne felt an almost overpowering sensation of pleasure, and a scarcely defined wish to live and die where she was.

In a short time the Tyrawleys had their suite of rooms allotted to them, and Lady Anne hers; and Lady Anne began the education of little Harry Percy. She had taken, while in Clarges.street, an instructor in the Latin language, the rudiments of which her father had taught her, and she succeeded in learning enough of Latin to enable her to be of great use to her young charge : but finding that the village curate was learned, virtuous, and poor, she hired him, at a salary double that which he asked, to assist her in educating her adopted son ; while Miss Tyrawley, who had once been

a governess a governess in a family that had travelled and resided abroad, undertook to teach him meanwhile as much as should be necessary of French and Italian.

While the little Harry, now four years olJ, was taught useful and regular habits of application, his health and Lady Anne's too were much improved by daily exercise; and every morning before breakfast Lady Anne and Harry breathed the fine air of the mountains, and returned to breakfast blooming as the natives themselves. Indeed, now she had an object on whom her affections could with propriety be placed, and all the benevolent usefulness of her nature exercised, Lady Anne was become a different being, and she resembled Gray's description of * Cheerfulness'—

a nymph of healthiest hue,

Her buskins gemm'd with morning dew:" whilethe hours, which during her residence I 2 at at Lady Jane's had hung occasionally so heavily on her

hands, now flew with incredible rapidity. When she had been at Green Rock three months Percy came down for a few days, and was charmed to see his child grown and improved both in mind and body, even in that short time; and when he departed he expressed his hope of bringing Lady Jane down when the London season was over ; and Lady Anne's d■.licacy and judgement were better satisfied with the prospect of seeing him accompanied by Lady Jane, than they had been by his visiting Green Rock alone.

When Percy returned to London, Lady Jane was pained, though pleased, to hear with what delight he spoke of his visit, and of the improvement visible already in his little boy; and she took occasion to observe, that it would be a pity a woman so calculated to undertake the

education education of children should not herself be a wife and mother.

" She will be both, I hope and trust," said Percy eagerly, " one day or other, for I do not mind her resolutions to the contrary."

" And do you *really* wish Lady Anne to marry ?" as eagerly returned his wife.

" To be sure I do. Can you think so meanly of me, as to suppose that any consideration for my child's interest could make me so base as to wish Lady Anne not to fill that situation for which her virtues qualify her?"

Lady Jane had *no such* meaning : but she had no objection to Percy's remaining ignorant what her real meaning was ; and assuring him that she spoke without much thought, she left him to dress for a party, a good deal relieved by the assurance that he did wish Lady Anne to marry.

Three months after this, Percy entered

Lady Lady Jane's dressing.room one morning with a strong expression of pleasure on his countenance, which he explained by telling her, that by a letter from his solicitor he learnt he had recovered for him a debt of several thousand pounds which his father had given up for lost.—Eut Lady Jane's pleasure at this intelligence was completely destroyed by what followed: " therefore," added Percy, " I shall be able to fulfil my poor mother's wishes, —which were, that I should sue for a barony that is in her family; her family being, though not as old and noble as my father's, a

very respectable one, with a title in abeyance.—1 know that it will cost me some thousands to succeed : but my right is indisputable ; and though I should grieve much to leave the Lower House, it is on my conscience to try to get into the Upper one.—Therefore this money comes to whet my almost blunted purpose.—But

what

what is the■matter, Jane? you seem going to faint!" And so she was, so much had Percy's intentions overset her. But Percy attributing her illness to her situation, which she had just disclosed to him, suspected not that it originated in a moral cause, and after seeing her a little revived he left her to the care of Ellis.

As soon as he was gone, she gave way to the utmost violence of despair, and shutting herself up alone she paced the room in almost phrensied violence; for, having lately prevailed on herself to look over the bills which Ellis had brought her, she had convinced herself that at least two. thirds of the money that Percy had recovered would be necessary to discharge her debts,—which must soon be disclosed,— although the sum given her by Lady Anne had served to pacify some of the most clamorous creditors.—Could she then be so treacherous and base as to allow Percy

to to enter into the expenses of law-proceedings, when she well knew he would be distressed for money to defray them ? No: she could be extravagant, and even viciously prodigal; but she could - not so far betray the confidence of a generous husband; and she resolved therefore, though at the certain risk of being, as she told Lady Anne, " not only an outcast from Percy's affections, but from his roof also," to confess the whole of her delinquency, and show him the necessity of appropriating his thousands, not in the acquisition of new honours to himself, but in preserving some little reputation of common honesty to *lier.* But how could she endure to meet his agonies and his resentment upon the first disclosure ? She could not do it, and therefore resolved to write the disclosure, and set off unknown to him for Lady Anne's abode, there to remain till

the the first storm of his feelings had subsided, and to await there his final decision respecting her future destination; for, after what he had said, she had no idea that he would doom her to a less punishment than banishment.

Accordingly, after a night of wretchedness, passed on pretence of illness in a separate apartment from her husband, Lady Jane arranged every thing for her departure with Ellis, her unavoidable confidante. As soon therefore as Percy went out on his usual morning. walk, the letter of disclosure was laid on the table in his library. Then telling the servants she was going out for a drive into the country, Lady Jane and Ellis got into a post.chaise, without the former's having dared to trust herself to see her little Lionel, and she desired the postillion to drive in the exact contrary direction to Wales; but in the next street she gave different orders, and arrived in a frame of mind the most i *S* pitiable pitiable at the end of the first stage on the road to Green Rock. Here, though very ill, she took fresh horses and proceeded; but at the end of the second stage she was too unwell to go on, and before night she had symptoms of fever.

Percy meanwhile had been unavoidably detained from home till a late hour, and on his return his first question was, " How is your lady ?"

" My lady is very well, I believe, sir," said the servants, " for her ladyship and Ellis are gone out in a post-chaise to drive into the country."

" In a post-chaise! Why not in the carriage?" cried Percy. But recollecting himself, he concluded that Lady Jane was gone on some errand of charity, and did not choose to be known ; and void of all alarm he entered his library ; nor, though he saw a letter there directed to him ih Lady Jane's own hand, did he believe it was

any

any thing more than an explanation of her errand into the country with Ellis. His surprise and his misery therefore were unspeakable when he read the letter, and found that Lady Jane had withdrawn herself from his resentment.—" But she has done *wisely"* said he, " and I thank her ; for, had I seen her in the first transports of my just resentment, I might perhaps have reproached her too bitterly 1" . ;

That livelong night he passed in sleepless wretchedness; but when morning dawned he had contrived to think himself into more composure*;* for he had taught himself to set against her guilt in incurring so vast a debt, her generosity in avowing it, in order to prevent his commencing a suit, of which it would not be in his power to pay the unavoidable

expenses: "And she^did it too," said he, " though at the risk of losing me for ever!—There was virtue in

that, and perhaps she is not wholly irreclaimable. Perhaps, if I treat her with lenity, I shall *shame* her into reformation ; and her generous nature, for generous it certainly is, will be piqued into a requital of my kindness by abstaining from evil in future."

It was Percy's *oivn* generous nature that spoke; and having resolved to listen to it, he went to bed, and to sleep. At eight he awoke, resolved to go in pursuit of his wife; for, though she told the driver in hearing of the servants to go to such a place, he had no doubt but she was gone to Lady Anne ; and by nine o'clock the next day he was on the road to Green Rock, and in a post.chaise by himself, that the servants might know nothing of what had passed ; and he took care to inform them before he dismissed them the preceding evening, that he had found a letter from Lady Jane, informing him

that that she should not return for a day or two.

When he reached the inn where Lady Jane had been forced to stop, he got out while they were changing horses, and he saw a female resembling Ellis going up-stairs with a phial in her hand. He immediately followed, and, overtaking her, received the painful intelligence that her lady was in one of the chambers in an alarming state of indisposition brought on by wretchedness of mind. In an instant away fled all his projected reproaches, all idea of meeting her coldly, and all the angry dignity of an offended husband, which he had resolved to assume when they met.—Jane, his adored Jane, ill, perhaps dying, at an obscure inn on the road, was the image uppermost in his mind, and he insisted on following Ellis to the bedside of the invalid. He did so; and Ellis had scarcely said " My lady!

here's here's my master!" when Lady Jane felt herself in the arms of her husband, and his tears trickling on her neck.

" This is too much—too much goodness, too much happiness!" she exclaimed. It was indeed!—happiness beyond what her merits deserved, and beyond what it was *now* in her power to enjoy.— " I will make no promises of amendment," cried she mournfully to Percy, " I *dare* not, for I distrust myself,"

" I hail what you have now said," replied Percy, " as a better omen of amendment than fifty promises would have been; and from this moment, mybeloved, only remember the past sufficiently to warn you against the temptations of the future!"

Lady Jane blessed him for his goodness, and tried to be cheerful: but her body as well as her mind was suffering; and the medical attendant whom the alarmed Ellis

had

had called in, assured Percy, that if the lady were to travel immediately he could not answer for the consequences. In three days time, however, she was able to be removed, and Percy proposed, that instead of returning to town they should proceed to Green Rock and surprise Lady Anne. Accordingly, Ellis was sent to London by a coach that passed the inn door, and Lady Jane and Percy were to go on in a post-chaise to the next stage, there to remain till Ellis returned with Lionel in their own travelling carriage. In two days time they reached Green Rock, not without Lady Jane's having experienced excessive alarm from the badness of the roads. But the welcome which they received from Lady Anne, and the sight of her child looking so healthy and so well, banished for a time all painful sensations from Lady Jane's mind; and while she saw with rapture the joy expressed by the

twins twins at meeting, and the pleasure Harry took in showing Lionel all his new toys, new books, and pretty garden, Lady Jane felt that dissipation and all its gaieties had nothing to give equal to the pure pleasure she at that moment experienced, and she believed herself capable of living in future for the enjoyments of the affections alone. But other thoughts, of a far less pleasant nature, soon obtruded themselves on her mind ; and though she had had so recent a proof of the fondness which Percy felt towards her, still she could not contemplate the now brilliant beauty of Lady Anne, which formed a complete contrast to her own sunk eyes, hollow cheeks, and artificial complexion, without feelings of jealousy and alarm; especially as Lady Anne never spoke without riveting Percy's attention on all that she uttered.

I have known envious and jealous women more than once express the jealousy

they they could not conceal, but in a way to render it unsuspected by superficial observers ; for they have *seemed* to express it as a *joke,* though they themselves knew the feeling to be a sad *reality;* while the unsuspicious hearers considered as a piece of playful good humour, what was in fact of a very different description. Lady Jane, taught by the same consciousness, had. the same way of venting it as those women had—and one day after dinner she began thus: " Pray, Mr.Percy, how old do you think Lady Anne was last birthday ?—I should think about seventeen by her look, should not *you?"*

" Thereabouts," replied Percy, gazing with admiration on Lady Anne, whose cheek, before glowing with perfect health, now bloomed with the blush of modesty. ;

" I protest I will not stay here—for I look so old and so ugly by you, Lady Anne, that I can't bear the sight of myself. Besides, sides, if I do stay, 1 shall hate you cordially ; for it is quite out of the question you know, Mrs. Tyrawley, for a faded fashionable belle to bear the sight of a young beauty like Lady Anne, quite in her prime!"

" Your ladyship is joking," replied Mrs. Tyrawley; "for I think, if I recollect right, that you are a year younger than Lady Anne ?"

" Aye, according to age,—but what am I in look, in health, and even in feelings? I am sure Lady Anne might say with more propriety than Monsieur de Coulanges did when he writes to Madame de Scvigne, ' qu'a coup sir on a commis quelque grosse erreur de date dans son acte de bapteme.'"

" Jane, Jane, be quiet," cried Percy smiling, " you make Lady Anne b!ush." ; " Hold your tongue, foolish man ! I know what I am saying; and do you really believe in your silly heart that Anne

is is not woman enough to be pleased with being complimented on her good looks *V*

" No :—a *few* compliments on hel: looks may be ph asing to any woman, even to a Lady Anne Mortimer,—and so are a few gentle coaxings on the back to a cat, —but if long continued they become painful and irritating, and so is prolonged flattery to a modest woman."

" There, Percy !—who has made Lady Anne blush *now ?*—and O how I triumph! I have effected my wishes ; for, by dint of blushing, as I have often seen happen to her before, her colour is become purple and coarse, and I should not be ashamed now to show my genteeler face by the side of hers. Trust me, I know how to destroy a rival beauty. And now, Anne, that you are no longer so intolerably handsome, I feel friendly towards you again, and will not go away till *tomorrow."*

Mrs. Tyrawley and her daughter, and

even

even Percy, thought all this was mere *badinage:*—but it was a real transcript of her feelings, and the flushed cheek and therefore diminished beauty of Lady Anne imparted to her in truth the pleasure which she expressed.

The next day, and the next, and the next to that, were days of variety, and therefore of pleasure, to Lady Jane. But when she had heard all Miss Tyrawley . had seen abroad, and Mrs. Tyrawley at home; had witnessed the wonderful improvement in reading of the little Harry, and seen, not without much pain, that Lionel was a dunce to him; had been waited upon by all the neighbours; had become acquainted with all the drives and all the walks; she sighed to return to London, and was very glad to hear Percy say that he must return to his parliamentary duties: —and the next day witnessed the prepay rations for their departure.

While Lady Jane and Lady Anne were sitting alone together in the drawingroom, and the twins were playing beside them, Lady Jane catching Harry in her arms, and violently kissing him, said, " Come, dear boy, get on your hat and coat, for you shall go back to London with us and Lionel."

" That I won't," said the boy, struggling to get away from her.

" O yes ! you shall—To be sure you love me, Harry ?"

" Yes, I love you—but not so well as mamma Anne."

" No!—Still, when I tell you I wish you to come and live with me again, to be sure you will ?"

" No—I tell you I won't!" cried the boy.

" Aye! but you must," said Lady Jane, " you must go with your poor own pretty mamma Jane, as you used to call me."

"But

" But you are not pretty mamma now,—you are old, ugly, painted mamma!"

** You little unnatural being !" cried Lady Jane, irritated beyond measure. " So, Lady Anne," she added, turning on her a look of suspicion and reproach, " you have not, I find, with all your fine schooling, taught the boy the commandment to honour his mother! And I know not how such

a child should understand what being painted is; but I comprehend still less how he should have thought of applying it as a term of reproach, if he had not been taught by some one older and wiser than himself."

" Meaning me?" haughtily demanded Lady Anne.

" If the cap fits your ladyship, you may put it on." Anger, the great leveller, making even *a woman of quality*

vulgar.

Then

" Then now Lady Jane, hear my fixed resolution," replied Lady Anne : " Your various errors 1 could pity and forgive; I thoughtyou weak, not vicious; and I trusted that time, kindness, and lenity might reform you: but now that you have displayed such malignity of nature as to accuse me, your earliest friend, of an act of *baseness,* of trying to lower a mother in the opinion of her child,—an action which you know me to be incapable of,—I never will hold communion with you more. My religion teaches me to forgive you; but I feel that the woman who was capable of uttering the malignant charge you have *now* uttered is unworthy any longer to be my friend and associate." So saying, she walked out of the room; whilethelittle Percy clungtoher, crying " Take me with you, take me with you, *good* mamma Anne," and by that means increased the pangs of the already repentant Lady Jane, whose reflections

were were certainly of a most unpleasant nature. "

" Where is Lady Anne ?" said Percy, entering ready equipped for his journey— " the carriage is ready."

" She is gone, I believe, to her own room," replied Lady Jane bursting into tears, " and I, I fear, have seen her for the last time."

" What do you mean ?"

" Why, you know she is sometimes rather captious; and she is so offended at something I said very innocently, that she has renounced me for ever!"

" But," exclaimed Percy, after a pause of indignant surprise, " you must have been very much to blame, or Lady Anne could not have formed so violent a resolution."

" Yes—I knew you would take her part," said Lady Jane provokingly. " However, I wish you would ring, and

send send your compliments to her, and beg to be allowed to take leave of her."

Percy did so. Lady Anne immediately sent word, that she should be glad to see Mr. Percy in her dressingroom—and he obeyed the summons. He found Lady Anne pale and agitated ; but, in reply to Percy's earnest wish to know from her the cause of the quarrel, she said, " I would not repeat Lady Jane's words to you on any account; suffice, that I never will voluntarily hold intercourse with any one that believes me, even for an instant, capable of a base action."

" And who *can*, who *does*, or who ever *did* believe you capable of such a thing ?"

M Lady Jane, sir; and any thing else I could have pitied and forgotten."

" Amazement!" exclaimed Percy, " but if you will not explain, she shall:"

VOL. i. K and and rushing down stairs, be ran in search of her. But Lady Jane, afraid of seeing him alone after his interview with Lady Anne, had left the drawing-room, and was sitting with Mrs.Tyrawley and her daughter in the breakfast parlour. Thither Percy followed her, and, entering with a very agitated air, desired to see her alone.

" No, thank ye," cried Lady Jane, forcing a laugh, " I had rather stay where I am; for I know you are going to be very fierce, and the presence of these ladies may keep you a little in order."

" No trifling, madam: I have seen Lady Anne "

" Who, never trifles, certainly!—Well, Mr. Percy, and I suppose her grim" ladyship told tales of me, and you believe them, as you deem her infallible?"

'* I wish I could think the same of your ladyship," replied Percy sarcastically :—″ but as I wish not to pain

your your feelings unnecessarily by talking on a certain subject before these ladies, I must *insist* on leading you to another room."—And Lady Jane no longer dared to refuse compliance.

" Lady Jane," said Percy, " I cannot, will not leave this house till I have seen you reconciled to the mistress of it, to. whom we both owe so much, even though your pride be forced to undergo the misery of concessions."

"What, sir! I flattered myself you were too proud for your wife, to bear to think of her making concessions to any one?"

" I must be proud *of* my wife before I can be proud *for* her, madam, and 1 am at this moment thoroughly ashamed of her."

" Has Lady Anne then told you all ? "

" She has told me nothing;—but my knowledge of her makes me think her likely to be right as far as passion can K 2 ever ever *be* right, for you say that she was *violent.″*

" And you *believe* me. Well, that is a great deal. However, I cannot tell a falsehood, and would rather, at any time, own myself in the wrong, than not do justice to another: therefore, I *own* that / only was to blame ; and that, however severe Lady Anne was, I deserved all and every thing she said or intended."

" Strange, inconsistent, faulty yet fascinating being !" cried Percy, disarmed by this frank confession, " whenever I feel inclined to throw you from me with one hand, I long. at the same time to clasp you with the other."

"Thank you! thank you!" cried Lady Jane, "you are only too good to me: but go to Lady Anne, and try to mollify her."

Percy did go, but Lady Anne was inexorable. exorable.—" I pity and forgive her," she replied, " but I cannot associate with her:" and Percy, distressed beyond measure, returned to Lady Jane.

" I cannot live without her entire forgiveness," said she, " I can't *indeed,* Percy. To be renounced by my friend, my preserver, my benefactress, will

kill me!—But I will make one effort to affect her ; and if that fail, I fear that even your love will not support me as it ought." Lady Jane immediately wrote a few lines, and giving them to Percy, he went to deliver them in person to Lady Anne. Lady Anne took the note, and turned very pale while she read it. Immediately after, without one word of objection, and in a faltering voice, she said, " I will attend you to Lady Jane immediately." Then, as soon as she saw her, she advanced towards her with open arms,

and and faintly articulating " I forgive you," she mingled her tears with those of Lady Jane.

Lady Jane's note was as follows: " You know my situation—and the delicate State of my health :—therefore, it is not very improbable that you may never see me more, even should your relenting heart prompt you to wish to see me, and to forgive the injustice towards you of which I bitterly repent.—Ask then your own heart, Lady Anne, whether, should I die of my confinement, you would not exclaim, with intolerable and eternal bitterness of remorse,—' O my beloved Jane! would, would that I had forgiven thee!'"

Lady Jane well knew the heart to which she appealed, and she did not, could not appeal in vain.

When all the adieus were over, and

Lady Lady Jane and Percy seated in the carriage, " Now, Jane," said he, " do give me some little hint what the quarrel was about."

" Why—to be serious, I think I had some right to be provoked,—though not with Anne,—and it was all owing to Harry. For, would you believe it? when I, in joke, was teasing him to go home with me, stating myself what he used to call me, his * poor own dear pretty mamrna Jane,' the little wretch replied in a great rage, * No,—I won't. You are not my pretty mamma *now,*—you are my old, ugly, *painted* mamma.' "

" That was provoking, indeed."

" Aye,—was it not? And can you wonder that I wished to whip our little *hope* into an utter despair ?"

" Upon my word, I should have been inclined to whip him too, if I had heard

him. him. But what had this to do with Lady Anne?"

" Oh ! I chose to accuse her of not teaching the urchin to honour his mother, and hinted a suspicion, partly in fun and partly in earnest, that some one must have *taught* the boy that I was painted; and *so* Anne thought I meant *Iter."*

" And did you not mean her?"

" Something very like it, I own; but then 1 was in a *passion,* you know !"

" Well—well!—let us say no more on the subject," said Percy. " I see yours is but a bad casej so I am very glad that a juror was withdrawn, and that the matter goes no further."

Though Lady Jane arrived in town in perfect health, the agitation of mind which she had undergone, and the alarm she had experienced from the badness of the roads, had a pernicious effect on her

frame, frame, and a premature confinement was the consequence soon after she was again settled in London, during which she had the satisfaction to see, by Percy's affectionate attention, that though she had *deserved* to lose his heart, that heart was still fondly devoted to her. There are men, I believe, in whom the habit of constancy, and of undeviating attachment, is as strong and unconquerable as in virtuous women ; and ill befall that wife who, though conscious of her happiness in possessing the faithful tenderness of a devoted husband, can dare to abuse the power which she possesses, and to tyrannize, because she maydo so with impunity, over the heart that loves her even with all her faults!

Whatever change dissipation, secret anxiety, and late hours, might have made in Lady Jane's person, there was no alteration in her manners; they, and even K 5 her

her countenance at times, possessed all that abundance of charm which had in her earlier hours so fascinated Percy: and so powerful had been their united influence on Mrs. Tyrawley and her daughter, that Lady Jane gained more on their affections in a few days, than Lady Anne had done in several months:—nay, so strong were their prepossessions in favour of Lady Jane, that they had no doubt but that, in the late quarrel, Lady Anne's proud, unyielding spirit was alone to blame ; and they were quite shocked at Mr. Percy's forcing his wife to make concessions to her, which they had *no doubt* he had done. " For my part," observed Mrs. Tyrawley, " I should have been very jealous of the woman to whom my Mr. Tyrawley should have forced *me* to humble myself. Indeed / would *not* have done it. And if Lady Jane had asked me *my* advice, I should have told her *my mind.* Men are entirely what we make them; and like spaniels, the more they are ill-treated, the fonder they grow. Remember *that,* Mary, and never give up an inch of your prerogative when you are a wife. I am sure Lady Anne herself would not do so, though she was the means of her cousin's doing it."

Thus hasty in judging, and consequently thus erroneous in judgement, are nine hundred and ninety persons out pf a thousand, who take upon themselves to pass sentence on the actions and sen-' timents of others ! I have heard of an old gentleman, a humourist, who, living in a large city, and having appropriated one room in his house to parties who assembled there for the purposes of rational conversation, had different texts of Scripture of a prohibitory nature, in black and gold letters, on different sides of the walls j—such as, *' Keep thy tongue from

evil

evil speaking1" " Judge not, lest ye be judged; for with the measure ye mete it shall be meted to you again.:" and many others of the same kind. If any one, regardless of these golden rules, ventured to tell a tale of gossip, and to talk of persons insteadof things,—he used to point to these warning letters; and if that was not sufficient, he used to take up a book of history ; and presenting it to the offender, it was his custom to say, " I shall be very happy to hear any litde anecdote about my friend Hannibal or Scipio, which may have escaped the notice of historians; but you must excuse my listening to *modern biography.* When I read or hear any thing *fabulous,* I can forgive its *lies* only in favour of its *antiquity."*—If this hint was not taken, he was careful never to admit the offending person again. And

indeed such exclusion was not often necessary; for those whose powers of animation could

only only be awakened by dirty gossip, alias news, and the wagging of the tongue of detraction, found his parties as dull to *them,* as they themselves were odious to *him;* and in a short time after these parties were instituted, and these rules adi hered to, those who composed them might be said to breathe an air untainted by the pernicious hydrogen of slander.

But to return to Lady Anne, who had not as yet learnt how injurious to the cause of virtue are manners which repel, and that even truth itself must wear a becoming dress, in order to make her welcome:—One evening the little Harry, who had been to spend the day with some boys rather older than himself, at a gentleman's house in the village, came home crying, and his temples bleeding profusely :

" Be not alarmed, my lady," said the footman, who had been sent to fetch him, ** master Percy and another young gen.*r* ., tleman tleman quarrelled, and master Percy was knocked down; and so, my lady, in falling he struck his head against something, and set his temple bleeding, my lady."

" But I am afraid he is hurt," cried Lady Anne, " as he cries so bitterly. Come with me, my dearest boy, and let me know every thing." Accordingly she took him to her own apartment; and as soon as he could speak intelligibly, the child said, " I don't cry because I am hurt, but because Master Apreece said I was no gentleman, and he would never play with me again! Now, a'n't I a gentleman, mamma Anne, and ought he not to play with me again ?"

Lady Anne could not help smiling at this serious appeal from a gentleman of seven years old; but with great gravity she answered, that it was not birth alone that made the gentleman, that good behaviour was necessary, and she must beg to know

what what he had done, before she could decide whether Master Apreece was right, or not.

" Nay, I am sure, mamma Anne, *I* did no harm ; for I only spoke as I have often heard you speak."

" Indeed ! and how was that ?"

" Oh! Master Apreece said something which I did not think true: so I said, 'That it is not, I know; so let's have none of that, if you please, for you don't speak truth:' and so he knocked me down."

** I do not wonder at it, my dear, as you accused him of being a liar; but when did you ever hear *me* speak thus ?"

" Oh! I have often heard you say,— ' That's not true, 1 am sure, and I wonder you can repeat such vile storiesand it was only last week that, when Miss Jones and her mother and aunt were here, you interrupted Miss Jones in a

sto$_r$y story she was telling, with—' Say no more, Miss Jones—say no more, I will not hear you ; I am sure the story you are telling is false, and I wonder any one dare repeat such things: for my part, I hate gossips, or gossippers:'—and I am sure, mamma Anne, I wonder Miss Jones did not knock you down. But she certainly looked as if she had a great mind to do it; and if she had been Master Apreece, she would have done it—though I am sure, with all the pains I took, I know I did not look and speak like *you"*

" Pains! did you take pains then to look and speak like me ?"

" O yes! for Papa told me that the more I was like you, the better he would love me." And Lady Anne could not resist kissing his poor wounded temple. " Well, Harry ! I plead guilty to this rudeness to Miss Jones, for *rudeness* it was, and I must learn to improve for your

sake, sake, as you are such a shrewd observer and close imitator of my actions."

" *Rudeness!"* asked the child. " Aye, they said they supposed I learnt such manners *of you;* for, said Master Apreece, * your mamma Anne, as you call her, does not mind what she says, and every one thinks she is a disagreeable woman.' And I was so angry at his speaking thus of you, that I tried to knock him down: but his brother held me back: however, I did give him a pretty good kick on the shins."

Lady Anne was too just to punish a child for a fault of which she had been the cause, and too wise not to profit by the severe lesson which she

had learnt. She also saw that she could more easily amend him by example than by precept; and what all the raillery and advice of Lady Jane had failed to effect, was brought • about about by the artless eloquence of her affectionate son.

" Yes," said Lady Anne to herself, " I will at last, for this dear child's sake, condescend, as Percy once said, to be agreeable. I will dismiss my advanced guard of *brusqueries*, which used to frighten many from approaching me. But hard indeed will the task be, and no motive less powerful than mine could enable me to succeed in it: still, it is not *impossible* to reform one's manners. Moral habits, however wrong, cannot I believe be altered at my time of life, any more than a defect of form or face; but manners may be improved and changed, as certainly, though not so easily, as one's dress; and I must own that winning manners are to the virtues, what a becoming habit is to the person : therefore, it is the duty of those who wish to promote the

influence influence of virtue, to make her appear in as attractive a form as possible."

The next morning, Mrs. Tyrawley, after praising Lady Jane, ventured to hint that, by her appearance at times, she feared she was not happy, and from what she saw she doubted that Mr. Percy was not a kind husband. If Mrs. Tyrawley had said this only the preceding day, Lady Anne would have thundered upon her with, " I wonder you dare, madam, presume to calumniate a most worthy man, of whom you can know nothing,"—or words to that effect, accompanied by looks and tones of the most indignant contempt. —But now, according to her late resolution, Lady Anne checked the rising storm, and forced herself on principle to swallow down two large draughts of cold water which stood near her, before she replied. At length she said very gently, " The error which you have fallen into relative

to to Mr. Percy is one, my dear Mrs. Tyrawley, which your own penetration will soon convince you *is* an error, whenever you have an opportunity of seeing more of that gentleman."

" To be sure," said Mrs. Tyrawley, pleased at the implied compliment, " one ought not to be too hasty in judging."

" A wise and virtuous remark/' resumed Lady Anne. " I will not affront your sagacity, nor violate truth so much as to say my poor cousin is quite happy. She has, I see, fears concerning the event of her confinement, which would alone, you know, be sufficient to cast a shade over her countenance."

" Certainly, certainly," replied Mrs. Tyrawley, thinking she never saw Lady Anne so agreeable before.

" And I assure you, my dear Mrs. Tyrawley," she added, " I say it to you as

a friend, a friend, Lady Jane gave me such an instance of her husband's recent kindness to her, as affected me even to tears."

" Really ! Well—to see how one may be deceived!"

" Pray," asked Miss Tyrawley with a very wise look, " is it true that Lady Jane has lost a great deal of money at play ?"

Lady Anne could hardly command herself at this coarse and direct question, and she had recourse to the water-bottle again.

" Lady Jane has played certainly," observed Lady Anne at last: " but, my dear Miss Tyrawley, you know too much of the world to place any confidence in newspaper reports and gossip stories: therefore I am sure your candour will lead you not only to disbelieve that Lady Jane's losses are very great, but also to contradict such assertions yourself whenever you hear them. Contradiction of such reports

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from a woman like you, must always have weight with rational good people." -..

" I am very glad to hear your ladyship say this," replied the flattered Miss Tyrawley, " and I will take care to contradict the report whenever I hear it."

Soon after Harry came in, accompanied by a prosing old servant, who wanted to speak to his lady on business,—a man who usually tired out Lady Anne's patience very soon;—and the poor man, conscious of this, was always slower with Lady Anne, from fear, than he was with any one

else. This day he was perhaps slower than ever; and Lady Anne could scarcely refrain from saying, as usual, " Really, Hibbert, you are so tiresome, I can't bear it," and was inclined to give vent to even more *alarming* expressions of weariness.

" I see, my lady, I see, as usual, I tire your heart out," said the poor old man, " and you are quite impatient."

« You

" You mistake, Hibbert," replied Lady Anne gently, " I am *not* impatient —that is, I mean that I will try never to be impatient again ; for it is a very bad custom, and I mean to improve—for you know, Hibbert, I am not yet too old to learn."

" Too *old !* God bless your ladyship ! No—that you are not, and I never seed you look younger or more beautifuller in your life, my lady ! I hope no offence."

" None at all, good Hibbert, but go on—and don't fancy that you weary me." And the old man proceeded.—But it required all Lady Anne's firmness of character to enable her to keep her resolution of not expressing her impatience; and at length the little Harry exclaimed with a laugh, " Dear me, Hibbert, have you not done yet ? I am sure my mamma Anne is completely tired, and she has pleasanter things to do than to sit here listening to your tiresome speeches."

" Your

" Your mamma Anne, sir, is of a different opinion," replied Lady Anne, " and feels it her duty to listen with respectful attention to a worthy old servant, who has always done his duty by her and her family. I must therefore desire you, Master Percy, to leave the room, for having made that fine speech; and when I have finished talking to Hibbert, I have something serious to say to *you."* The child, accustomed to obey, left the room, though in high displeasure; and at last, much to Lady Anne's joy, Hibbert ended and departed.

" Well! Lady Anne, I am sure I wonder at your patience/' said Miss Ty. rawley.

" You wonder, I presume, at its *novelty,* rather than its *extent"* replied Lady Anne smiling, and going in search of Harry, whom she soon appeased by telling him her own resolution to amend her manners, and curb her impatience in

order order to set him a good example; and she contrived to stimulate his pride and ambition in a virtuous direction, by begging him to set her a good example in return. When Lady Anne retired for the night, she began on principle to recall the occurrences of the day, and to ask her own heart, whether, by substituting gentleness for roughness, and forbearance for impatience, she had at all violated, truth and sincerity: and her heart entirely acquitted her. " But suppose," said Lady Anne, " instead of trying to set Mrs. Tyrawley right concerning Percy, and her daughter right concerning Lady Jane, I had replied by indignant violence, as I usually do — the consequence would have been, that pique would have made them tenacious of their opinion, and I should have bjured those whom I wish to serve. Aye,—let me in future ever bear in mind the fable VOL. i. L of

of The wind and the sun! and I will make .Harry get it by heart immediately."

The next week the Joneses were coming to dine with her,—though Miss Jones, resenting Lady Anne's rudeness, could with difficulty be prevailed upon by her father and mother to venture near her again. To this family Lady Anne now resolved to add the Apreeces, who, concluding that Harry had told his aunt all their son had done and had said, expected never to be invited again :—it was therefore an agreeable surprise to them to receive an invitation written in Lady Anne's own hand, and begging them to bring their children with them—as she meant to let Harry have a party as well as herself. Accordingly, on the day appointed, the little Joneses, (grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. Jones,) and the Apreeces with their family, arrived at Green Rock. Miss

Jones Jones kept aloof from Lady Anne, and looked cold and proud; but Lady Anne's unwonted courtesy at length a little mollified her: and though the Apreeces, particularly Charles, the offender, looked awkward and conscious at first, Lady Anne seemed so gracious and good-humoured, that they nattered themselves she was ignorant of what had passed.

It was not long before Lady Anne took an opportunity, in Harry's hearing, to say to Miss Jones, " My conscience smites me on your account, and tells me I was rude to you when you last favoured me with your company."

" Rude ! my lady!" said Miss Jones blushing, confused, and with too little firmness of character to dare to say " Yes."

" Your kindness may have led you," continued Lady Anne, " to excuse and forget it; but I am sure that I contradicted *i*, 2 you you very roughly, and said something about gossips and gossippers which nothing could excuse. I therefore now, my dear Miss Jones, tender my most sincere apologies to you, and trust to your indulgence for receiving them graciously." Miss Jones did so, and was indeed so gratified by this condescension from the proud Lady Anne, that she wondered how she could ever have been so weak as not to like her.—This lesson and this example were not lost on the little Harry; for Lady Anne saw him soon after go up to Charles Apreece, and heard him say, that *knowing* he had been very rude to him, and deserved the blow which he had given him, he begged his pardon for what he had *said;* though he could not for what he had done when he spoke so rudely of his dear mamma Anne.—, Charles Apreece, being old enough to feel awkward at this address, as he was

sure sure it was overheard, shook the little Harry by the hand, and said, " I must forget and forgive ;"—and Harry took him to look at his rabbits.

Lady Anne the whole day made a point of showing marked attention to Charles Apreece, and in the course of the evening she took him by the hand, telling him she wanted to speak with him alone; while the terrified boy, having no doubt but that she was going to take him seriously to task for what he had said of her, would have refused to accompany her, if he had not thought he ought to be too much of a man to be afraid of a woman. —When they had reached another room, Lady Anne said, " You have given Harry and me too a lesson, my good boy, for which we shall, I trust, be the better as long as we live.—To give any one the lie, and speak coarsely and rudely, is a sort of *vice;* and 1 thank you for the

blow blow you gave Harry, and also for what you said of *me*, as it made me look into myself, and I hope to be more agreeable in future. I wish therefore to give you a token of my gratitude, and I have netted this little

purse for you, which I hope you will do me the favour to accept." —The poor surprised, sheepish boy could neither look up nor speak, and he took the purse with scarcely a bow of thanks.—" Now/' said Lady Anne, " it is my turn to give *you* a lesson :—you were very wrong in speaking disrespectfully of me to my adopted child; it was a fault which though anger might occasion, it could not excuse; and though he was wrong in kicking you out of revenge, yet his feeling of resentment was an honourable feeling. I know he has made his apologies to you for his trespass against *you;* and if you are the generous boy which I am disposed to think you,

you you will ask him to excuse yours against. *him"* Charles Apreece found it easier to look Lady Anne in the face when she reproved, than when she thanked him; and when she ceased, he ventured to say " I beg your pardon, and I will beg Harry's."

" There's a good boy," said Lady Anne: " and now, if you please, you and I will begin our little ball together; for I have ordered the harpers into the hall, and we will have a dance."

On which Lady Anne, leaning on her young partner, entered the hall, where the company was already assembled ; and the delighted parents saw Lady Anne put herself at the head of the set with Charles, —while Mrs. Tyrawley and Mrs. Jones were the only persons of the party who did not join the dance.

" I cannot think," said Miss Tyrawley to her mother in a whisper, " what

has has effected such a change in Lady Anne. To think of her dancing, and with that boy who knocked Harry down!" But Lady Anne never danced except with children; and now, meaning to pay Charles Apreece a particular compliment, she sat down, and danced no more, as soon as she had danced two dances with him; and Charles as soon as he quitted her went up to Harry, and begged his pardon for having spoken ill of Lady Anne;— a pardon which the happy and generous little boy immediately granted.

Oh! what a revolution in every one's sentiments had now taken place respecting Lady Anne! Her beauty had always been unquestioned; but now her courteous manners, her grace, her countenance, were equally praised;

and Mrs. Tyrawley was seduced, by the unusual suavity of her manner, to accost her once by the title of dear cousin! Lady Anne felt, forcibly

felt, felt, the alteration of feeling towards her which this appellation implied; and turning towards her with one of Lady Jane's smiles, she said, " Thank you, dear madam. I was afraid till now, that you did not choose to own me for a cousin, as you never favoured me by calling me so ;"— while tears started into Mrs. Tyrawley's eye, for shame at having so long mistaken Lady Anne's character.

" Lady Anne," said she, "or my dear cousin, you are one of the few persons who ought to have a window in their heart."

" I understand you," said Lady Anne smiling, " but I trust that it will in future be unnecessary; for I mean to have an inscription on the outside—to show what there is *within."*

The next week they were agreeably

surprised by a visit from Percy and Lionel;

and as Lady Jane was tolerably well,

Percy took advantage of the Christmas recess to steal down to Green Rock for a few days. He gazed with all a father's pride at the beauty and .healthy appearance of Harry, and with a father's anxious tenderness on the contrast between him and his brother. Nor was he slow to perceive that their minds were as different as their persons; and he found that, though Lady Jane was quite as sensible and as well.informed a woman as Lady Anne, her want of regularity in her mode of teaching, had prevented the child's profiting as much as he ought by the instructions he received from a private tutor; and but for the fear of hurting Lady Jane's feelings, he would have left Lionel under Lady Anne's care. But the little Lionel had a longer opportunity of sharing in Harry's education than Percy expected ; for a deep snow fell in one night, and continued so long as to render the roads impassable with safety ; and the terrified Lady Jane, losing in fear for the safety of her husband and child, all dread of Lady Anne's increasing influence, wrote to desire he would *on no account* think of returning till the roads were quite safe.

Could Lady Anne have thought it right to rejoice at this detention, she would have rejoiced; but, accustomed to struggle with and to conquer every feeling that militated against her sense of right, she tried to regret the necessity which made Percy her inmate for so long a time, and determined to see as little of him as possible. Percy was not long before he perceived the change in Lady Anne's manner, and also in his little boy's. One day he was joking with Harry; and the child, not understanding that he spoke ironically, forgot himself so far as to exclaim in his former rude way, " That

it it is not, though—and you don't speak truth."

" Harry !" cried Lady Anne; and the conscious child added, with many blushes, ** I am sorry to contradict you, papa, but I think you are wrong." And while Percy hugged the little boy to his heart, he said," How is this, Lady Anne? There are great changes and improvements here."

Lady Anne smiled, and said, " Harry, shall you and I tell papa what brought about this improvement in our manner ?"

" O dear! yes; tell papa all about it," said the delighted child; and Percy listened with the most interested attention. But when Lady Anne had ended, he felt a degree of embarrassment he could not account for, and an

utter inability to express to her half of what he felt on her candid avowal of her fault, and her resolution lution to amend it for the sake of her charge. Besides, he recollected how often he had said Lady Anne's *brusquerie* was her only defect; and he beheld her before him, as handsome and excellent as ever, without this only barrier between her and the power of being irresistible.

" You are an admirable creature," he at last articulated;—" and I shall bless the day when my child became the child of your adoption." Then with a deep sigh he quitted the room—while Lady Anne allowed herself to dwell neither on the sigh nor the words.

The fortnight of enforced confinement flew too rapidly for Percy and Lionel; and so it did for the ladies. The Tyrawleys lost all prejudice *against* Percy, and imbibed a strong one *for* him ;—and while Mrs. Tyrawley spun, Miss Tyrawley worked muslin, and Lady Anne coloured maps for Harry, Percy read

aloud aloud to them; and the hours which he did not pass in the House of Commons, now for the first time of many years were passed in rational amusement combined with daily instruction.

" O that my own home were like this!" he exclaimed to himself. " It might have been! and why, O why is it not?"— But at length the parting hour arrived; and Percy, with a full heart, departed with his weeping child for that home so different to the one that he had left.

About six weeks after his departure, Lady Anne's peace was interrupted by a letter from Lady Jane, urging her, if she had any regard for the peace and honour of Percy, and any wish to save her from addresses which might end at least in loss of reputation, to pay to Lord Lorimer several thousand pounds which she had lost to him at play! he having offered to give up the debt, if she

would

would allow him to prosecute his suit to her as a lover; and stating that, though she loathed the proposal, yet dread of confessing her fault to Percy prevailed on her to accede to it for a time.

Lady Anne sat for some minutes in speechless, motionless horror, after she had received this letter. Whatever her errors might be, she had always considered Lady Jane's virtue as impregnable: but now her confidence in that was destroyed ; as she had proved that the dread of incurring her husband's displeasure was more powerful over her, than that of exposing herself to the risk of dishonouring him. But Lady Anne was wrong. Lady Jane well knew she was in no danger by consenting to receive Lord Lorimer's addresses, because she was certain that Lady Anne would, when informed of what she had done, immediately hasten to her relief. But at first

Lady Lady Anne started wildly from her seat, as she could not devise immediate means of doing this. But she recollected that money had been offered for one of her estates very recently. <' Yes, I will sell it," cried she: " far better will it be for the child to possess one estate less, than to lose a dearer possession, the consciousness of his mother's unblemished honour and reputation!"

In a few hours every thing was arranged for Lady Anne's departure for town; and telling her friends that indispensable business summoned her away, she consigned the weeping Percy to their care, while with a beating heart she proceeded on her journey—attended by an old steward of her father's.—She drove immediately on her arrival to her bankers; and putting into their hands the writings of an estate for which she had been offered 20,000/, she requested of them the immediate loan

of

of the sum she wanted; and having received it, she returned to the carriage in which she had left her steward, and telling him she had business with Lord Lorimer, she drove to his house.—Lady Anne, though conscious of her own unsullied purity, and spotless character, had too wise a regard to decorum, and the established usages of society, to call alone on Lord Lorimer, even though on business of such serious imDortance: therefore, when the servant said his lord was at home, she insisted that her steward Mr. Moreton should get out with her.— Lord Lorimer was at home, reading, and in his dressing.gown, when his gentleman entered, and said, a lady wished to speak with him.

"A lady! what lady?—Is she young and handsome ?"—" Young, and beautiful as an angel, my lord."

" Bravo ! show her into the little parlour!"

lour!"—" My lord! I have shown her into the drawing.room."—" Blockhead! is she proper drawing.room company, think you?"—"Yes, my lord ! I should think her, by her look and manner, fit for a palace—and that she was a queen. She is not, I assure you, my lord, like any ladies that ever call on your lordship."

" Bravo ! another Jane de Montfort! I protest this beauty has made the fellow eloquent!—Well; now to. judge for myself."

" Stay! stay, my lord! pray put on your coat—I am sure the lady is a lady, my lord ! "—However, Lord Lorimer proceeded as he was, having first looked in the glass to ascertain whether he was " *in face* ;" and sauntering affectedly into the drawing.room, his astonished eye rested on the tall majestic figure and severe though beautiful features of Lady Anne Mortimer.

" This is an honour, madam," said he, " really so unaccountable," (though in his heart he suspected why she came.) " that I should not have thought of coming down to your ladyship in this dress— Pray excuse me while I change it." And glad of an excuse for~retiring in order to recover himself, he went back to change his gown for his coat.

" You are right, Dawlish," said he to his man—" there is only one Lady Anne Mortimer in the world, and I might have known her by your description, could I have thought her highmightiness would have deigned to call on such a sinner as myself."—Then, having new tied his neckcloth, and new brushed his fine black crop, he returned to Lady Anne, who had relinquished none of her dignity, but, with her arms folded in a long velvet mantle, and her head and face uncovered, stood motionless and

grand, grand, like Mr. Kemble in Coriolanus on the hearth of Tullus Hostilius.

" I beg you will do me the honour, madam, to be seated."

" No! I will not, my lord," replied Lady Anne, no longer the urbane, smiling mistress of Green Rock; but cold, haughty, and repellent as the Lady Anne of former days—" My business with you will be soon settled."

" I am sorry to hear it for *my* sake, as I should be most proud to detain your ladyship some time under my roof—honoured, indeed, by such a presence!"

" As I should not consider the honour as mutual, my lord, I cannot regret the unavoidable shortness of my stay. Allow me to go with you into the next room, and you, my good Moreton, stay here till I return." She then entered the next room through folding doors, which were open; therefore, though she spoke so

low low that Moreton could not hear, he saw her all the time.—" I came, my lord, as you may guess, by desire of Lady Jane Percy, to discharge the debt she owes you ; and to assure you, that Lady Jane has in me a friend and a relation, who would spend the last shilling of her fortune sooner than allow her to owe for one instant a pecuniary obligation to Lord Lorimer, or any man."—So saying, she laid down the money, and turned her dark eyes upon him with a look of such severe expression, while her full red lip projected still more with contemptuous indignation, that even Lord Lorimer was awed and abashed.

'* Come, come, Lady Anne," said he, recovering himself,—" unless Lady Jane really desired you to pay this money, I cannot take it."

" Sir! I expressly told you that I came by Lady Jane's desire ; and if I did not,

you

you must know that when one woman confides to another a disgraceful secret, she makes that other the judge of her actions; and if I had not waited on you at the earnest request of Lady Jane, I should have come to have satisfied *myself."*—" But now, really, Lady Anne," replied Lord Lorimer, piqued into a wish to provoke her,—" can you be such a novice as to suppose Lady Jane *wished* in her *heart* to get out of my debt?"

" My lord, can I, do you think, suppose my cousin, Lady Jane Percy, an abandoned woman ?"

" Abandoned! No. But do you think it possible for a woman of her associations and habits of life to be so *much* shocked at this little debt to me?—Remember, Lady Anne," taking her hand by force, " Scripture says, One cannot touch pitch without being defiled!"

" Pitch has touched me," replied

Lady Lady Anne, drawing her hand away with an action expressive of loathing, " and yet I trust I am not defiled!"—Lord Lorimer immediately turned away muttering a terrible oath.—" But, my lord," said Lady Anne, " 1 am losing time: here, as I said before, is your money!—And now, my lord, here ends the visit of Lady Anne Mortimer."—Then, with a polite but chilling curtsy, she beckoned Moreton, and not waiting to have her carriage called, tripped lightly down stairs before Lord Lorimer could even offer her his hand. But he followed her to the door, and stood bowing there till she drove off.

" That is a woman, indeed !" said he to Dawlish, when he came to dress him. " Such a woman might tempt a man to marry, for she has a proper sense of her own value; and though Lucifer was humble, compared to her —her pride is that

of Qf conscious virtue and a character untainted I" ». !i../ . - /< ;..]■T

Lady Anne went from Lord Lorimer to Lady Jane; dreading the emotion which she knew they should both feel on meet. ing, and perplexed to know what excuse she should make to Percy for so sudden and unexpected a journey to town.— Yet surely business was a sufficient excuse ; and it was only her consciousness that made the difficulty.—She found Lady Jane so unwell as to keep her bed greatest part of the day; and Lady Anne was so shocked when she saw her faded looks, that every other feeling was swallowed up in pity and apprehension.—As soon as Lady Jane heard Lady Anne announced, she screamed aloud with joy, and sprung up in her bed; but as soon as; she saw her, she sunk down again and hid her face in the bed.clothes. . ■ ,

" Nay, Jane, lookup! I came not to

upbraid upbraid you ;—I come as a friend, not a reprover." And Lady Jane received her in her arms.—" Well, Anne ! my good angel ! will you, will you—save me ?"

" No ;—for you are already saved.— I have this moment paid Lord Lorimer."

Lady Jane could not speak—and agitation soon forced her to lie down again. But such power had Lady Jane's mind over her body, that now her debt to Lord Lorimer was discharged, and Lady Anne had not reproached

her, her health returned, and she was able to join Percy and Lady Anne at dinner in her own dressing-room.— Percy was delighted to see Lady Anne, but very sorry that she did not bring Harry with her.—" I will tell you what, Percy," said Lady Jane, " though I would not have sent for Lady Anne to be with me during my approaching confinement—now she is here, I cannot part with her again; and I am

VOL. I. M sure sure she cannot, will not, dare not refuse to stay. Therefore, let Barnes come up directly with Harry, and our cousin Tyrawleys remain to take care of Green Rock."

Lady Anne did indeed not dare ta refuse; for she well knew, if Lady Jane's confinement should be fatal, that she should not forgive herself for having denied her. Accordingly Barnes and Harry were sent for, and arrived in three days after in Piccadilly.

Thus then was Lady Anne obliged, though very reluctantly, to take up her residence once more in London. Still she could not but own to herself, that the society which Lady Jane assembled at her house at least two or three times in a week, for the purpose of conversation, was productive of the highest species of intellectual entertainment. Men of talents, whether of rank or otherwise,

graced graced the parties of Lady Jane, and called forth in their elegant and lively hostess the colloquial excellence which peculiarly distinguished her; while Lady Anne, gratified in listening to those sallies in which she thought herself not qualified to join, sat. in unmoved though intelligent silence ; and while Lady Jane, light, splendid and changeable, sparkling like the drop lustre that hung over her head, diffused around her an ever-varying radiance,—. Lady Anne resembled more a tall and stately candelabre, diffusing a steady and unvaried light, and keeping one fixed though ever-graceful position.

But the great ornament, the great charm, of these intellectual evenings was Percy himself. The ready playfulness of his fancy; the graceful manner in which he narrated, and the mild yet convincing way in which he argued, made him at once the delight of his guests, and the , M 2 pride

pride and pleasure of his wife and of Lady Anne. But the latter suppressed, as if it were a criminal indulgence, the pleasure which she took in his

conversation on these occasions, and suppressed it the more, because she suspected that Percy had a secret satisfaction in shining before *her;*—a suspicion which only too soon was excited also in the breast of Ladjr Jane. The latter was therefore very glad when, all remains of indisposition being vanished, she was able to mix generally in the world again, and to have an excuse for discontinuing those meetings at her own house, which could not fail to throw Percy more into the presence of Lady Anne than her jealous feelings could support with calmness. For it was indeed only too true that Percy felt his own home quite a new abode to *him*, since Lady Anne returned to it; and several times he caught himself

calling calling her " Anne," as he used to do in

his boyish days; but correcting himself, he

said " Lady Anne" the next moment..—

Still, he could not bear the formality of

that title, and therefore substituted " My

dear cousin," or "Coz," for both. And

Lady Jane, having easily discovered the

reason of this change of appellation, in the

new feeling which Percy, unconsciously

perhaps, indulged towards Lady Anne,

became even more wretched than she had

been before.—Still, she felt that she had deserved this misery; for was it not the

contrast of her errors with Lady Anne's virtues, which had excited in the mind of Percy the feelings which distressed her ? This conscious uneasiness had however power to make her reflect more than she had usually done; and in one of these reflecting humours the following dialogue took place between her and her cousin:— <f It is impossible, Anne," said she, " to

account account satisfactorily for the great difference which exists between you, and me, though in our age and our rank in life we are so

equal, and in blood so very near to each other; and this difference was, I know, discernible even in our childhood."

" It fills me with no wonder, Jane," replied Lady Anne, " for the varieties in character are as many as in faces. I once heard a great artist say, that no head or face had its duplicate, properly speaking, and I believe that the same thing may be said of every mind."

" But, admitting that truth," replied Lady Jane, " and admitting also the forming power of circumstances, how comes it that the same apparent circumstances operated so differently on you and on me ?

" J j like you, was born a girl, when my parents wanted a boy to inherit the titles and entailed estates, and were naturally

enough enough disappointed, as they had no other children, at the certainty that the said titles and estates would go to a cousin whom neither your parents nor mine cared for, and whom they scarcely knew."

" You should however add, Jane, that both you and I were as fondly beloved as if we had been of that sex which would have gratified their ambition as well as their love."

" True :—and that adds to the list of operating circumstances in which we resemble each other. But to go on—I was born an heiress, however, though not an heir, and my father's personal and my mother's entailed property were my ever destined portion; while your mother's. immense possessions were to descend to you, and you therefore were always a predestinate *great* heiress. Yet, there never was a time when I was. not extravagant

and and you prudent, though I was not born, and knew I was not, to above a sixth part af your fortune; and I always used to hear you called my *rich cousin .'—And* I wonder how this could be—and...$_{w}$ You smile?" '../..-.

" Yes. I smile to see that you wonder, and imagine probably a remote cause for this difference in our daily habits, when a proximate and very obvious one would satisfactorily account for it." .. "Well, explain."

" My dear Jane, our mothers and our fathers were as different in their habits as you and I are; and I have always felt my affectionate pity for your errors. increased by the consciousness that I owe probably to your

mother's warning example, that system of education which has. preserved me from those rocks which have wrecked you ; my own conscious safety; made me feel the more for your danger." ;

"Was

" Was my mother so notoriously 'ex'i travagant'(*"*

" Her sister, my beloved mother^ thought her so ; and though her fortune was not by any means equal to my mother's, who had been; treated as an *elder son,* she always exceeded *her* in her expenses as much as you have exceeded *me ;* and conscious that the different sort of education which they had received had. occasioned this difference of character, as

the Marchioness of D was brought

up by a sensible well-principled aunt, and the Countess ofl^ by a weak mother of great laxity of principle, my be* loved parent, assisted by the strong intellect and rigid integrity of her husband, endeavoured to guard me by early habits of right conduct from the errors of her sister;—errors which would, she saw, become the portion of her sister's offspring."

M 5 " Well.

" Well. But how did your parents, however able, guaranty you from the dangers to which 1 was exposed; namely, that of being told by servants, and governesses, that I was an heiress, and ought to have all I wished ; and that money,—what was money to me ? that I might eat gold if I liked?"

*! In the first place, I never had a governess, and my mother, as I was an only child, kept me *almost* always in her sight; therefore I was very little with servants; and ideas of the true duties and rights of heiresses were instilled into me too deeply by my parents, to make me in any danger of being misled by the false ideas which servants might attempt to give me. —But our servants, from interested motives, and also from respect to their lord and lady, did what other dependents in similar circumstances would do, they chimed in with the plans of Lord and Lady

Q. ; and I do not remember that any

servant ever offered to tempt me to an action which *principle,* or *my parents,* disowned. I use them as *synonym Oils terms,"* added Lady Anne,

with a glow of filial pride on her cheek, and a tear of filial regret in her eye *;* " for the dictates of my parents were, I well know, those only of reason and of virtue."

"..I should like some of this chemical process of theirs, which produced pure gold, while *my* poor papa and mamma produced gold full of alloy; for I must say, Anne, I think I have some gold about me, and I believe I am as generous in a pecuniary point of view as you are." . ... ,

" In every thing," replied Lady Anne modestly, " you would have been *niy*■ equal, if not superior, doubt it not, if you had had my advantages."

" Well, thank ye, Lady Anne! it is

so so pleasant to be able to lay the burthen of one's sins on another's shoulders!" . " What! on those of a parent, Lady Jane? Ofy!" .. .

u Aye, very true. And I'll say O fy!

also, if you will not look so

But, dear Anne, I remember how my poor mother laughed, when she came home from a visit to yours in the country, and saw you looking so demure, and so contented in a shabby cloak and hat; and when she asked why you were allowed to wear a dress so unworthy a great heiress, the Marchioness answered, that it was because you had voluntarily offered to go without a new cloak and hat, that the money they would cost might be expended on a poor family which you had discovered in the neighbourhood.—* What nonsense!' replied my mother, (Lady L ,)

' when you could afford to give Anne ■. ... .;. , . ' : . :.. those those new clothes, arid money beside* for the poor family!'—* I wish solemnly,[1] answered the Marchioness, 'to impress on my daughter's mind, that settdenial is the foundation of every virtue, and that on personal sacrifices is built the most acceptable benevolence to others/ And then,' added my mother, as she related this scene to my father, * that solemn child Lady Anne looked round at me so self-satisfied, and so conceited, that I could have whipped the little urchin.'"

"And what effect had this maternal wisdom on you?" asked Lady Anne smiling.

" What it might have had, I do not know," said Lady Jane, " for my father replied, * You had better stay at home and whip your own urchin, Hortensia; for I suspect she deserves it rather more than this good little Anne; for, if she *did* look conceited, it was the conceit of virtue.'—' But what right has a child to

look, look, or be, conceited at all?'—'Ask your daughter Jane, ma'am, whenever you dress her in a new bonnet, and cry out, How lovely she looks! Come hither, my beautiful child, and kiss me.' My mother bit her lip, but did not reply: and the pleasure which I felt at hearing my mother laugh at you, of whom I was always jealous, was damped entirely by my father's defence of you; and I even le;irnt to think that / should like to earn what my father called the conceit of virtue."

" Your father, at least, seems to have * had wise ideas as a parent ?"

" Yes; But he was too volatile to think long, and too indolent to act on his own wise precepts. The light he shed on my path was only that of lightning, bright and transient, and more formed by its sudden flash, and as sudden, extinction, to mislead than direct me."

" What

" What a pity! for he had mind enough to appreciate the conduct which your mother ridiculed ; and believe me, Jane, that to a succession of personal sacrifices like these, I owe that indifference to dress, and consequently that want of temptation to extravagance in it, which, though I may have carried it too far, has preserved me from many of the miseries which you have endured. But Lady L— only witnessed one instance in which, in principle, my mother founded my education on an annihilation of selfishness.— From childhood I was taught to share every thing that was given me with others, and to consider myself last. That eagerness, that greediness to be first and best served, which disgusts one every day in children, was never conquered in me, because it was never suffered to gain ground,—and all my habits were those of regard to the accommodation of others

before before that of my own. Less acute observers than my revered parents were; would laugh at these plans, and fancy them trifling and unnecessary ; but depend on it that the moralists of all ages have not only

considered man as a bundle of habits, but the human character as made up of almost as many imperceptible particles, of which habits are the chief ingredient, as those which compose a mosaic pavement—and it is on the purity4 the brilliancy, and the strength of those component parts that the value of a character or the beauty of a pavement depends."

" Very true, Anne. But *still*. the question is not decided to my satisfaction, why I was so different from you, from *earliest* childhood. Lavish I always was; and though I was always ready to give to others, I was equally fond of giving to myself.—I should have been a princess certainly, certainly* for where. others gave ten pounds I always gave fifty." ...

" Then I hope you would have been a princess without a principality, else your subjects would have been greatly to be pitied ; for, unless oeconomy be the basis of even a *prince's* virtues and charities, he will in time be as poor as the meanest of his subjects."

" Aye—but oeconomy was never a word in my vocabulary, nor in that of any one belonging to me; and when I read of Cleopatra's dissolving a most precious pearl and drinking it off, I always admired her spirit, and wished I could do the same."

" That is exaggeration, Lady Jane: but still a weaker and uncorrected feeling of that sort has been the cause of your errors ;—but I fear that these results of a bad education cannot now be gotten rid of, and all we can do is to endeavour to *curb. curb* the propensities which we cannot wholly remove."

" Heigho !" cried Lady Jane, " I fear what you say is just. But don't you think, Lady Anne, the safest way would be to put me, not into a house of absolute lunatics, but in a receptacle for those who are only half.and.half?"

" But there is no such place."

" Very true, Anne, and I fear that there never *can* be; for.the demand for such houses, if once begun, would be so *great*, that there would never be found hands enough to build, nor ground enough to build upon. But a truce with reflection and satire, and let me dress for the opera. Yet, no—I have a confession to make," she added, her beautiful eye* suddenly filling with

tears, " which has long weighed on my mind. The forgetfulness of *self,* which was taught you in

childhood, childhood, has distinguished you in every action of your riper years—and that consideration of self which was taught *me* in childhood, has shown itself, in many serious instances, in my matured life."

" Well, Jane—but this is no new confession."

M No :—but have patience.—Alas! dear, unsuspicious Anne, no sooner did I see that Percy preferred you, than my jealousy of you took fire, and though I did not love Percy, I could not bear that he should love you better than me. The consequence was, that I left no art untried, when he returned from abroad, to convince him that I was deeply impressed in his favour; and as I felt no real tenderness, it was easy for me to affect it in my manner; while *you,* too conscious to dare to let your real feelings be known, wrapt yourself up in coldness and reserve, till the poor youth, fancying you almost

disliked disliked him, sought refuge in my inviting smiles and obvious partiality."

" Why do you tell me this?" exclaimed Lady Anne much agitated—" it can do me no good." - !" No—but it relieves my mind:—and Oh!. Anne, grudge me not this relief, for a severe retributive justice has overtaken me; and the heart of Percy, whom I now love as he ought to be loved, is at length estranged from me by my faults, and attracted towards you by those virtues which, but for my base selfishness, would have rendered him happy." So saying she rushed out of the room, leaving Lady Anne resolved that she would return to Green Rock as soon as ever she could.

But the jealous pangs of Lady Jane were soon lost in others of a more terrible, though not so bitter and corrosive a nature. . ,,.

Who can say where the consequences . .-. '. of of a wrong action will end ? A criminal or an erroneous act is like an. arrow winged out of sight—no one knows whither it is gone, nor whom it may wound. It was impossible for a Lord Lorimer not fo boast of having had a visit from Lady Anne Mortimer, of whom he now chose to profess himself deeply enamoured.

" A visit, and alone!" ' *' Yes, that is to say, attended only by her servants."

" You are a happy fellow *I* I did not even know she was in town."

" Very likely not: mine was the first house she drove to."

" I can't *bAl* ve it," said one.—" This is one of your boasts,". said another.— However, at last, one gentleman who heard it, and who hated Lord Lorimer, thought proper to tell Percy what he had heard. Percy immediately exclaimed,

" It " It must be false—Lady Anne Mortimer could never degrade herself so much, nor violate decorum so grossly."

" But I heard Lord Lorimer assert it; and whether true or false, his prating ought to be put a stop to."

" What can I do ?—Stay—I will write him a note, asking him whether he did say so and so."

« Do so."

And Percy, having dispatched his note, received the following answer:—

" Dear Sir,

" I certainly *did* say that I had the " honour of a visit from Lady Anne Mor″ timer as soon as she arrived in town, and " attended by servants only ; for in so *' saying I told the truth.

" Yours, &c.

" LORIMER."

*' Amazement!" cried Percy, more

hurt hurt and more alarmed than he wished to appear ; for this was no boast: he was afraid it was some business of Lady Jane's, some wish to serve her, that could alone have led her to such a deed ; and telling his friend Colonel Rothrie that he would be back very soon, he went to interrogate Lady Anne herself. Luckily he found her alone. And after some vague, embarrassed conversation, he said, " Oh ! *cl. propos,*—a gentleman told me, what I could not believe, that you had paid a visit to that coxcomb Lord Lorimer, and attended only by servants."

" And did the gentleman believe it?" said Lady Anne, struggling to appear calm.

" O no!—it has been much talked of, but nobody believed it."

" I thought so," said Lady Anne proudly. " I knew the world was generally just, and that it would not be ready

to to Believe a tale fc'rlie prejudice of Lady Anne Mortimer!"

" Then it is not true—and you did not call at Lord Lorimer's ?"

" I did not say so," replied Lady Anne turning pult*.

" O heaven i" cried Percy, turning pale also, " then you *did* call on him! and I am sure that nothing but the necessity of doing some great kindness to my unhappy wife could have led you to do so strange a thing."

" I had IV r. Moreton, a very respectable man, with me the whole time, or rather in sight: therefore, though he *is* my servant in one sense, he is a gentleman, and my Lord Lorimer tells a falsehood in saying I was attended only by servants."

" You evade answering my question,— *Why* did you go to Lord Lorimer's?"

" Mr. Percy," replied Lady Anne, **1 am not accountable to *you* for my actions,

' nor nor will I answer a question which I den J your right to ask."

" It is very well—very well," replied Percy, " I shall know in time;" and rushing out of the room, he hastened into the street, and rejoined Colonel Rothrie.

" 'Tis indeed true," said he, " Lady Anne owns it..—What shall I *now* do ?— He is a scoundrel for mentioning her visit, and I suspect I have more reasons than one for calling him to account."

" You have heard the other report then?"

" No:—What is it?"

" That Lady Jane has lost a large sum to him, and that the gentleman does not wish to be paid either in gold or notes:—« but I dare say it is only talk."

Percy struck his forehead as if in agony, and, having called for pen, ink, and paper, im ediately wrote to demand of Lord Lorimer on what pretence Lady VOL. i. . N Anne Anne called on him. The answer was this:— . ;

.« SIR,

.*' I have not told nor will I tell " the reason which induced Lady Anne " Mortimer to honour me with a visit. *'I cannot do it as a MAN OF HONOUR.

" LoRIMER."

This letter provoked a reply from Percy, in which he asked Lord Lorimer if it was acting like a *man of honour,* to boast ihat he had received a visit from Lady Anne Mortimer *attended only* by her *servants;* when the fact was, that she was accompanied by a respectable gentleman who alighted with her.— When once an angry correspondence takes place between men of the world, the consequences are usually obvious and unavoidable; and in a short time a challenge was given and accepted, and the . 'i time time and place of meeting appointed. But it was not without many " compunctious visitings of conscience" that Percy complied with what he considered as the indisputable commands of worldly honour, and prepared to risk the valuable life of a husband and a father, against the weapon of a thoughtless profligate, one who might have said in the words of Orlando, " If killed, I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me;—only in the world I fill up a place, which may be better supplied when I have made it empty." - Besides, he found it impossible to conceal from himself that his resentment against Lord Lorimer was occasioned more by a feeling of jealousy of *Lady Anne,* than of *Lady Jane ;*—and that his thirst of vengeance was excited not so much by Lord Lorimer's reported designs on his wife, as by his now avowed admiration of htr K 2 admirable

admirable cousin. "I will not return home this evening, till I am sure my children are in bed," said Percy to himself, as he leaned in mournful thought on a table in the coffee-house whence he had dispatched the fatal notes to Lord Lorimer; " for, if I were to see them again with the consciousness that I saw them possibly for the last time, my agitation would certainly betray me.—No! nor will I return till I thii.k Jane and Lady Anne are both retired for the night."—And he kept his resolution,—but in vain j for he found Lady Anne reading in the drawing-room, and when he saw her he started with the conscious confusion of guilt: while Lady Anne, aware that something was the matter with him, regarded him with looks of anxious inquiry.

" How is Jaue," said he, " my dear cousin?"

" Very unwell, and gone to bed." "Indeed!" he replied. " Then I shall continue to sleep where I have done since her illness, lest I disturb her." And so far her illness was convenient. Soon after, catching Lady Anne's eyes fixed upon him, he started up, unable to bear their expression, and ran out of the room. He then went softly into Lady Jane's apartment ; and as she was in a sound sleep, he gazed on her some minutes, wishing but not daring to imprint a kiss on her flushed and fevered cheek; till, fearful of being surprised while thus indulging his feelings, he suddenly left the room, and shut himself up in his own apartment, whence he returned no more that night. Therefore Lady Anne, whose fears were dreadfully excited, had *no* means of ascertaining whether they were just or not, and she went to bed in a state of great agitation.

Alarming

Alarming thoughts kept Lady Anne awake all night, and she had not closed her eyes, when, being alive to every noise, she heard some one go softly down stairs at six o'clock in the morning, open the halldoor, and go out. She instantly ran to the window, and saw Percy and Colonel Rothrie walk to a hackney.coach which waited at a little distance, and which drove off with them very rapidly.—" Then all my fears are realized, and he is gone to meet Lord Lorimer!" she exclaimed, beginning to dress herself with almost frantic haste, though when dressed she knew not how to act, nor how to prevent the meeting which she feared.— " But why should I thus torment myself with apprehensions that may be groundless?*' thought

Lady Anne: " Percy may be gone out as second only to Colonel Rothrie!" But when she recol. lected his question concerning her visit to . Lord

Lord Lorimer, and his evident dejection of the preceding evening, she felt that her alarm was only too well-founded, and she threw herself on her bed in an agony of grief. The next moment she started up, resolved to hasten to the Park, for she recollected to have heard that duels were usually fought there. But she immediately gave up this wild idea, remembering how improper, and how fatal to the reputation of a man,, is female interference on such occasions; and summoning all her self-command, she determined on the fortitude of remaining perfectly quiet and inactive; that difficult task when the mind is anxious and agitated, but which, generally speaking, is the most frequent and *becoming* duty of woman. Still, however, when the clock struck seven3 Lady Anne could remain inactive no longer; but throwing her veil over her head she ran down stairs; and telling the

porter

porter she: was going to take a turn in the Park., she'hratened thither in a state of almost frantic anxiety, and turned ddwn the path that led towards the Serpentine. River. Suddenly her haste was impeded, and e,vert her breath suspended, for she heard the sound of pistols; and in a terror that nearly deprived her of sense, she clung to the railing near her for support, unable to proceed, yet equally incapable of remaining where she was. At length, however, she made a violent effort, and ran rapidly towards the spot whence the sound had proceeded. But long before she was near enough to be recognised herself by any one on the banks of the water, she saw.a. gentleman advancing, whom she instantly knew to be Percy, and evidently in perfect safety! It was enough ! and uttering " Thank God ! he lives ! he is safe!": Lady Anne, ashamed of her emotion* and afraid.of K being

.t>ejpgiSe!en and known, turned,back, and endeavoured tp leave the Park as rapidly as she entered it. But this was impossible,: tears, amounting to sobs, impeded her power of motion, and she was forced to lean against the same rail for support under the agonies of joy, which she had so lately leaned against in all the misery of apprehension. But while she did so, she turned round again, in order to make " assurance doubly sure" that Percy was unhurt; and then she plainly saw Lord Lorimer, supported by two gentlemen., evidently wounded, though able to walk, while Percy and Colonel Rothrie were walking by his side. Lady Anne had seen enough to quiet her alarms entirely, for Percy was not only safe himself, but apparently he had not endangered the existence of another; and invigorated by this consciousness she pressed rapidly forward, nor did she stop again, till she reached N 5 home.

home. But, alas! when she re.entered the house, such tidings awaited her, as banished from her mind even the sense of joy excited there by the safety of Percy.

By a most unfortunate coincidence, a favourite little dog of Lady Jane's had that morning followed some one into the street, and was brought home worried to death, just as one of the house-maids, who had seen her master go out and drive off in a hackney coach, was conferring with Ellis on this subject at the door of Lady Jane's apartment. It so happened that this woman had lived in a family, the master of which, while she was servant there,. had been brought home killed in a duel; and having observed Lady

Anne's alarmed and mournful ex* pression, when she passed her on the stairs in her way to the Park, she had little difficulty in persuading herself that Percy was gone to fight a duel, and that

Lady

.Lrady Anne knew and suspected his intentions ; and she was communicating her fears to Ellis, when a bustle in the hall made her break off, and. run to* wards the gallery leading to the stairs. The noise proceeded from the servants, who were gathered round the body of the poor little dog, which was Just now brought home by a neighbour, and the house-maid reached the gallery just as one of the servants exclaimed; " Yes ! he is killed! quite killed! What will my poor Lady say ?"—This was enough for the house-maid, whose fears for her. master were already excited; and hastening back to Ellis, who was just going into Lady Jane's room to answer her bell which had that moment rung, she exclaimed, " I was right, he is killed! my poor master! he is kiUed! my poo» master i"

I... . .... As

. ;... ■ . '

As her door was open, Lady Jane distinctly heard these words; and springing out of bed, she saw by the countenances of her two servants that her ears bad not deceived her. The whole truth immediately rushed on her maddening brain Percy on her account had challenged Lord Lorimer, and she had been the means of destroying her husband !!! She fainted, tottered, fell; and in a few hours, amidst dreadful convulsions and in a state of utter unconsciousness, she gave birth to a dead child, and her life was despaired of.

Her danger and her sufferings called back all Percy's tenderness towards her, though his esteem was he feared irrecoverable; and when he considered that her life would in all probability fall a sacrifice to her affection for him, and agony for his supposed death, he scarcely knew. how to .,:..,.,. ... y.v.i endure endure the contrariety of his feelings,—-and he was never easy except when hanging over. her pillow, and lavishing on the unconscious sufferer fond but mournful caresses. From that restless pillow, from that unconscious sufferer, Lady Anne never never stirred. The cause of her sufferings, and her danger, endeared her *to* her heart still more.—Percy's presence, Percy's influence were no longer felt or dreaded by her ; her thoughts, her looks were fixed on one darling object alone, whose errors, serious as they were, were forgotten, while only her charms and her virtues lived in her remembrance ; and Lady Anne, still herself in every situation, now shone in the new character of an affectionate and

untired nurse. At length her anxiety was repaid by the recovery, the rapid recovery, of the object of it: for in one month after her life had been desjpaired of, Lady Jane, though still very

weak, weak, was able to be in her drawing-room. When she was thus far advanced towards convalescence, Percy begged Lady Anne to inform her of the duel, and its cause, in hopes that a consciousness of the danger in which her errors had involved her husband, would have a salutary effect on her conduct in future.

This was the first time that the subject of the duel had ever been mentioned, and Lady Anne took that opportunity of asking Percy whether the dispute with Lord Lorimer was not chiefly on her account ; and on Percy's answering in the affirmative, she replied, " I needed no champion, Mr. Percy. I am myself the guardian of my honour! and strong in an umblemished life, I can defy the calumnies of any one.—Surely, surely, then," she added, with more tenderness of voice and manner, " you will not think it necessary, when Lord Lorimer recovers, .. to

to risk again so needlessly a life so precious?" . '. .f. . .. , ,' • But to this direct question Percy gave an evasive answer* and all Lady Anne's fears were again excited. In consequence of which, she wrote a letter to Lord Lorimer unknown to Percy, which, much to his honour, induced him to write such an apology to Lady Anne for having boasted of her visit, and such a note to Percy as would have precluded any necessity for even a professed duellist to call him out again; and it was judged expedient, both by Percy and Lady Anne, that, in order to prevent unpleasant reports and surmises, Lord Lorimer should be received at the house as usual, as an occasional guest. ... . u Lady Anne, when all was thus amicably settled, disclosed the whole affair to Lady Jane; but she had the mortification of seeing, that though her cousin's agonies -*n* .. at at the recital nearly amounted to phrensy, no hope, or expectation, seemed awakened in her mind of being able to conduct herself so as to avoid similar errors in future; fof; too honest to feign the hope she felt not, Lady Jane never once. said .** I will reform, I will profit by my past bitter experience.*" ,

One day as Percy and Lady Anne .were sitting with the children, Lady Jane returned from her morning's drive, and entered the room with a very

grave coun.r tenance: then, sending the little boys away, she sa·d she wished to talk with Percy on business of importance.

** I come," said she, " from my uncle the minister, from my cousin ditto, and my uncle the bishop, on a deputation to *you,* Percy." '. ...

** Indeed!—Well; open your credentials."

" My relations well know all the kindness ness you have ever .shown, mej . for, in order to set you off in your true light, believe me I have never spared myself."

" That I believe indeed," said. Percy,, pressing her hand.—-" That we are sure of," said Lady Anne kindly.. *).I*. i ...

" Therefore, they feel themselves bound in gratitude to do something, if they CAN, to mend the fortune I have tried to *mar;* and thus then they speak through *me.* They know you wish for the Albany peerage, though you shrink from, the trouble of suing for it. It shall be, yours without suing for it,—yours by creation,—and they offer you your choice of the places now vacant by certain high resignations; or the embassy, now to dispose of also, to the Ottoman Porte; which if you accept, as I earnestly hope you will, I shall have an opportunity of shining forth another Lady Mary Wortley Montague in" letters addressed to theLady A M . *. These are offers made

warm from the heart; for most eagerly do ministers, whether my relations or not, wish to be joined by a man of your talents and weight in the House."

" No doubt," said Lady Anne. But Percy was slow to reply: at last he said, " You well know, Jane, that I honour both the talents and integrity of your relations, as men : but as I have the misfortune to differ with them on two or three essential points; I must, however my pride, my ambition, and my wants may urge me to accept their offers, most unequivocally, though alas most *unwillingly*^ reject them."

" Oh! how I rejoice!" cried Lady Anne. " And I grieve," said Lady Jane, " for 7 am no *politician."*

" Nor I neither, Jane," returned Lady . Anne, " and I think the term when applied to a woman is a term of reproach.

But But if I were a wife, I should value my husband's political integrity, were he Whig or Tory, equal with his life, and should wish the one to be resigned only with the other. Therefore, as Percy, without an utter surrender of his political character, cannot accept these offers, I rejoice that he has rejected them ; for it would indeed be a severe blow to me to be forced to forgo the exalted idea of him which I now entertain."

" Thank ye, thank ye, my noble minded friend!" cried Percy with great .emotion.

" Aye! and could you have said noble minded *wife* too," said Lady Jane mournfully, " you would not have been in a situation to have feit such offers temptations. Would I had died when I could unconsciously have breathed my last! Why did you try, why did you *wish* to save me ? It would have been

better better for us all, if you had let me die." Here she gave way to an agony of distress, which gave exquisite pain to the hearts of her auditors.

" Jane, this must not be. You have no right," said Percy, " to distress us thus."

" No right! Have I no right to feel my own unworthiness—and, feeling, to deplore it ?"

** Stop !" said Lady Anne, willing to turn the course of her ideas—" an idea has just struck me:—Is it *true*, Percy, that your affairs are in such a state as to make offers of this kind tempting to you ?"

" They are indeed. My West.India estates have lately yielded little or nothing, and, and"—" I will fill up the sentence," cried Lady jane, " he has had to pay unexpected sums for me!"— . " Then hear me," replied Lady Jane, " the *best* of us may yield in a moment of unexpected weakness to strong temptation.

As

As an Archbishop Cranmer yielded to it,—who can say that he shall always be proof against it ? "

" True!" replied Percy sighing: " and who should therefore presume severely to blame another who has been found frail?" "Well, then; lean without a single pang give up my establishment at Green Rock, and retire

into some cheap part *oi* England on one third of my income. The rest I conjure you to appropriate to the gradual payment of your debts j and pay me when—"

" Hold !" cried Percy, " nor insult us so much as to suppose, if retrenenment be necessary, that it shall not be made by *us*—not *you.* No, generous woman! It is my intention to give up "my townhouse next year; and, if I continue in parliament, to come to a lodging when my presence is necessary ; and this arrange

. ..... v"

ment ment will, I trust, in a year or two set

me free entirely," .. .

"This arrangement!" cried Lady Jane: " and have you then fixed your plans without consulting *mci"*

" May I ask your ladyship," said Percy, " if after what has passed you can think you have any *right* to be consulted ?"

" Oh no, no, no—forgive me! I know my own unworthiness. So then you prefer this scheme," said she recovering herself, " to acceptance of the offer I brought you!" . '

" Most assuredly."

" I am glad of it; as glad as Lady Anne: for if you had accept d it I know I should never have liked you so well again. I remember when I was a child I spent all my little money on a fine dress of my own invention for my doll, destroying the one it wore when I bought it; . . and and I procured some gold leaf too to cover its nose and its cheeks with ; and when I had thus made * a thing of my own,' I never liked it as well as I did in its original state. And thus, had I made Percy a minister, and smeared him over with the gold leaf of places and privileges, I should never have liked him 60 well again, as I did when he was the independent man I first knew him. O my dearest husband ! how glad I am that you have integrity, though I have none!"

" What you have just said, Jane, proves the contrary, and that virtue, though spellbound, is not *dead* within you."

" But, my dear Anne, if it never breaks the spell, it might as well be dead, you know."* Here she burst into a long laugh, which almost alarmed Percy and her cousin. When it was over, she said, -" A very charming idea has just struck me, my dear Percy,—I want you to sit

to for a fancy portrait. But no, I

forgot, you have no picture.money. However, Lady Anne has, and she will be very glad to pay for it; and the subject shall be Hercules between Pleasure and Virtue—that is *you* just now, between Anne and me. Here was I, Pleasure you know, tempting you with places and embassies and all manner of fine things, Turkish beauties, and what not ? and there was Anne, with her fine sentiments, and morals, and heroics, bidding you be a good boy, and not listen to naughty women!"

" 1 am glad to see you can be so merry, Jane," said Lady Anne.

** Merry !" cried Lady Jane.

" Well; light-hearted, if you will."

" Light hearted ! O the weight of such lightness!'

•Ilaugh'd; ' I laugh'd ; but 'faith I am not light of soul: And he who jnost Misfortune's scourge has felt, Will tell you, Laughter is the child of Misery*.'

My mirth is embroidery on a *pall;* it is a gay and glittering mantle wrapped round a corpse. O Anne! Is the brilliancy of lightning wholesome? Is the hectic *c£* fever healthy? Are these faded cheeks, these hollow eyes, signs of mirth and light.heart. edness? Nay, *mock* me not, my cousin!.... But check those tears, Anne: I deserve. them not.—Gracious Heaven! what a. contrast!" (seeing her own face and Lady Anne's together, in the glass.) '* Look at that cheek—even, pure, and wholesome as the mind to which it belongs ; and yet it is an older cheek than mine ! Anne, indeed I am very generous not to hate you."

" Jane ! I must interfere," cried Per

* See Miss Baillie's Plays. ' vqj*tl«J3 5* o cy: cy:—" you distress ycur cousin, and me too. My dear love, you are very nervous and irritable to-day, and fanciful;—I doubt that—"

" Yes, you are right; I am under the influence of a strong opiate.—Dearest Anne! compose yourself," she added: but Lady Anne hastily quitted the room. "Nor is the contrast in person, greater than in mind," continued Lady Jane. M How strange it is ! The only wish of her pure and innocent heart was disappointed, yet *she* had not recourse to dissipation or vice. She did not fit herself to exclaim with the poet:—

' -. i *.

*—all this giddy waste of years 5—
This tiresome round of palling pleasures!

Hadst thou been mine, had all been hush'd,
This cheek, now pale with early riot,

.With passion's hectic ne'er bad flush'd,
But bloom'd in calm domestic quiet!"

while

while I, happy in every granted wish of mine, *I* could not exist without taking drams forsooth !" ., ■ " Drams?"

" Aye, drams:—what is gaming but a mental dram—an alternation of hope and fear, which the disappointed and the wretched fly to, men and women sated and sick of every thing, in order to give them that artificial interest which their feelings are become incapable of? But I was *not* disappointed—I was happy:— ' blessed beyond my «ex'a charter; * and yet I gamed, and yet I squandered money! and yet I wasted the most precious years of life in heartless dissipation! O why did you save me from an unconscious death ? for, if I am conscious, my death-bed will be a dreadful one."

" My dear Jane," said Percy, " this distressing agitation is the result of too .. .. v o 2 frequent frequent stimuli and want of sleep ; and 1 *insist* on your lying down and trying to compose yourself."

" But will you stay with me ? will you watch by me as in our happier days ?"

" Yes, I will:—I will do my duty, Jane."

'* Your duty! O Percy! your duty tvas your pleasure once !"

" And is now, dear, captious, suspicious being!"

" And you will sit by me ?"

" Yes."

" Then perhaps I may once more sleep quietly." And Percy had soon the satisfaction of seeing her sink. into a tolerably composed slumber.

Such scenes as the foregoing now frequently took place; and sometimes when Percy and her cousin urged her to retire

with with them and thechildren to Green Rock, and give up the dissipation into which she was again plunging, she very justly replied, "I know and feel the value of these rational and virtuous pleasures, which you hold out to me; but I have now no power of enjoying them. Rich meats, fine fruits, and choice wines are delicious things ; but, if one has lost one's taste or one's digestion, they are offered to our lip in vain;—and so it is with me. My pursuits compared to yours, are as sour small beer to pure Burgundy! But, if I can only digest the former, I must persist to refuse the latter. You should have let me *die;* and that would have been better for us all:—and yet, and yet! After death comes judgement, Anne! And how does my account stand *V*

Though Lady Anne's rigid principles made her. wish to withdraw herself from

the the society of Percy, she gave up all idea of leaving Lady Jane while she continued in her present state of mind, because she did not think it right that Lady Jane should be left to thepainful influence of her own corroding reflections; nor could she give up all hope of awakening her, in some moment of self-reproach, to strong and effective efforts towards amendment: so difficult is it for affection to relinquish the cheering expectation of reforming its object,—so prone is it to hope on, till a resistless conviction flashes on the soul, that the reformation, at first

improbable perhaps, is now, even to the sanguine eye of love, become *impossible.*

But in order to explain the events that are soon to follow, I must go back to a fete given a few months before her illness by Lady Jane. I have before said that her taste was unrivalled,

and and her expenditure to gratify it unbounded. An inner apartment, in which supper was to be served for the ——-, was converted into an entire bower of roses—and roses so natural in their appearance, and at a distance even in their fragrance, especially as real ones were mixed with them, that the eye and even, the smell were deceived. She had bespoken these admirable flowers of her great man on such occasions, and he had procured them from a poor man near the Seven Dials, who had been taught to make them by an indigent Italian who had lodged at his house, and *died* there. This man, whose name was Walters, was the most improper person possible to be employed for a paymaster like Lady Jane, as he always owed his money before he earned it; not so mtfch from extravagance, as from the wish to buy little comforts for his wife, on whom he doted.

Walters. Walters had seen better days, and his pride had not fallen with his fortunes; he had a virtuous horror, I may call it, both of- a workhouse and a prison; but he wanted at the same time that virtuous firmness of character which resists running in debt, as the sure precursor of both. As soon therefore as his money for the flowers

was due, he dunned Mr. . for it;

and he, knowing Lady Jane would not pay him for years perhaps, refused to advance the smallest sum out of his own pocket, but desired him to go with his demand to Lady Jane herself, and say he sent him. Lady Jane therefore got the bill, accompanied by a statement of great poverty; and she had on this occasion the feeling, and the justice, to go to Percy with the account, which amounted to a considerable sum, as since the fete he had made for her roses and other flowers. Percy immediately gave her the money; but

that that evening she lost it all at the cardtable, and the poor wife of Walters was dismissed the next day with *promises* instead of *payment*. Again and again she came, till Ellis once more presented the account to

Lady Jane, who started with conscious baseness when she saw it: nor could she be easy till she told Lady Anne the circumstance, and received money to discharge it. But the next morn- 1 ing a tale of woe was presented to her of a vsry shocking kind; and as the general patroness of distress, Lady Jane gave to Charity what she ought to have given to Justice, and Mrs. Walters was again dismissed unpaid.—This was certainly an aggravated case *;* but still, severe was the retribution.

Poor Walters, oppressed. with debts, though two-thirds of the money due would have paid them all, continued to dun by.

turns Mr. and Lady Jane ; but the

o 5 latter

latter never heard of his repeated applications, as the rule of the house was, not to trouble their lady till creditors grew very

clamorous; and Mr. still refused to

pay him, because he was not yet paid *himself.* To fruitless dunning soon succeeded the mischievous alternative of *drinking.* The patience of Walters's creditors was at last exhausted ; and one day, when to the temporary exhilaration of dram-drinking had succeeded its consequent irritation and exhaustion, two bailiffs entered his now denuded apartment, and produced a writ against him. In vain his wife shrieked, and knelt, and prayed for time; it could not be granted, and poor Walters must go to prison. They had just been eating their dinner (alas! their last meal together), and the table was not cleared.

" You know, Fanny," said he, " I have always said I never would go to prison,—

nor

nor will I now:" and in an instant he cut his throat with the knife with which he had been eating, and sunk a bleeding corpse on the floor.

His wife—but she, I hope, was spared some agonies, even by the violence of those she endured, as all sense was immediately suspended in her, and reason completely overthrown* So. that in ten days after her poor husband's suicide she was the inmate of a mad.house! whence, however,

she had been dismissed as cured, at the very time that Lady Jane was first able to visit as usual.

Lady Anne and Percy had at length succeeded, they thought, in calming Lady Jane's mind, and convincing her that, if she would but forgo her bad habits, she would in time acquire good ones, and that the virtues of her future life (and she was not yet thirty) would expiate, they trusted, the follies of her youth..

But Lady Jane was not so likely to amend her conduct, as many other women under her circumstances would have been; because she had those popular virtues which throw a glittering veil over the vices of a character, and thereby bestow on it a false radiance difficult to detect. Lady Jane knew that those errors which had injured her husband's peace and fortune, and lowered her in his esteem, were either not known to the world, or were forgotten in her deeds of charity, her active benevolence, and the fascinations of her person: and though Tier heart was wounded by a sense of her faults, it required more strength of mind than she possessed, to break through habits the indulgence of which did not destroy that popularity which was her favourite idol.

. Perhaps there are no characters so dangerous in society as those which unite

great great virtues with great faults, and seduce by the former into imitation or toleration of the latter; while the unwary imitator, who would have shrunk with aversion from the contagion of errors unaccompanied by the attractions of virtues, becomes a prey to the one unconsciously, by means of the other,—as he, who would on principle reject the alcohol of a dram-shop, eagerly and unconsciously swallows the pernicious spirit when hidden in the palatable shape of a *liqueur.*

" Well, give me only till the season is ever/' said Lady Jane one evening, " and then I will turn hermit and live at Green Rock. And then

• may I, breathe my last,

Bless'd by the tongues that charm'd my youthful

ear, Mourn'J by the few my soul acknowledged here, Deplored by those in early days allied, And unremember'd by the world beside !'

. . . But But I am now so much improved in my looks, that 1 begin to relish society again. See, Anne, don't you think. I am very good.looking to.night ? But I am not quite dressed yet. When I burst on you in all my glory, I flatter myself you will admire."

" Poor soul! in all her *glory !* Is *that* a woman's glory?" said Lady Anne to herself ; and she was glad to be roused from a painful reverie by the entrance of Percy and the children.

" I thought you were going with Lady Jane," said Percy.—" No—I have a bad headach, and wish to go to rest early," she replied ;—when, dressed most becomingly in a robe of white satin, and in a blaze of jewels, Lady Jane entered the room.

" I flatter myself, good people," cried she gaily, " that I am quite beautiful tonight.—I have coloured my cheeks as like Anne's as possible, and what with judicious dicious displays, and more judicious concealments, I think I am quite the thing."

" You look like a *young* bride, Jane," said Percy.

" If I look *young* I ana contented, as I do not wish to be a bride again."

Alas! she was more like a victim dressed for sacrifice.

" Well, my darlings," said she to the boys, " I see you are dazzled by my jewels. But, in truth, as the wise Cornelia said, you are my jewels; and I trust that ere long I shall prove by my actions that I think so."

" God speed the time!" cried Percy.— " Amen !" said Lady Anne ; while Lady Jane, affectionately kissing her, said with one of her sweetest smiles, " Aye, kind, good Anne, I know I have always your good wishes; and when I deserve your good *word* too, it will be the

proudest proudest day of my life."—Percy now interrupted her, to bid her good night i, as he must go to the House, being already later than he wished to be: Soon after his departure, her carriage was announced, and Lady Jane took leave of her children and Lady Anne, which she did with much of her former playfulness; and turning back at the door, she kissed her hand, smiling as in her happiest hours,— destined, alas! to smile no more in this world.—A crowd, as usual, had assembled at the steps, where her carriage usually waited some time, to see Lady Jane get in. She now

appeared brilliant and beautiful as ever, and stopped an instant on the last step, perhaps for the pleasure of displaying herself. At this instant a woman rushed up to her, and almost buried a knife in her body. Lady Jane shrieked and fell, while the incensed

populace populace seized the assassin, and one of the servants drew the knife out of the wound.

Lady Anne had luckily just sent the boys to bed, who had been allowed as a frolic to sit up till eleven;—for the shriek reached her ears, and she flew rapidly into the hall. Alas ! what a sight met her view ! That beloved being, who had so lately left her radiant with conscious loveliness, and full of renewed hope of happiness to come, now bleeding and motionless, borne on the servant's arms, and probably in the very agonies of death! A deep groan burst from Lady Anne, which roused the senses of the sufferer; and Lady Jane, opening her eyes, recognised the pale and agonized countenance which bent over her. in tearless, speechlesssorrow j and shaking her head; mourn-. fully, she motioned to lay her head on her bosom. Jennings, meanwhile, had

ordered ordered the coachman to drive full speed to the House for his master, but only to say an accident had happened to his lady.

" What is to be done with the murderer, my lady?" said one of the servants to Lady Anne.

" Murderer!" cried she shuddering.

" Yes, my lady,—this is sheand Lady Jane, involuntarily following the direction of his eyes, saw a poor wild wretched.looking woman held between two men.

" Take that woman away! take her away! the sight of her distracts me!" said Lady Anne with a scream of horror; and she was taken into a room below.

" Who is she, do you know ?" murmured Lady Jane, who as yet resisted their wishes to carry her up stairs.

" I don't know who she is, my lady, but she says her name is Walters."

" Walters 1" muttered Lady Jane,

" Walters!

" Walters! I should know...." and suddenly recollecting her debt to the poor flower-man, she hid her face in Lady Anne's bosom, and groaned piteously.

" Do, dearest Jane, let us remove you up stairs," said Lady Anne.

" No,—lest I bleed to death before Percy comes." Nor, when a surgeon arrived, would she allow herself to be examined till Percy came.

Percy had left Lady Jane that evening with much of his former tenderness towards her renewed. She had looked more like her former self than she had lately done. She had promised well, too: she had looked and spoken like a mother ; and ever apt to regard the bright side of every thing, he had, on his way to the House, felt happier and more satisfied with his wife and his prospects than he had done for years.... when, on his approaching preaching the house, he was met by a man who told him his carriage was waiting for him. Alarmed he knew not why, he rushed hastily forward, exclaiming* " John, what is the matter ?"

" My lady, sir/' replied the man, scarcely able to speak, " an accident to my lady!" And Percy, not daring to ask more, was driven home in a state of terrible anxiety. But his wildest fears could not have imagined a more dreadful scene than awaited him on his entrance to that home, which he had quitted so full of joyful expectation, and his feelings were Still more agonized by what he heard from the crowd at the door.

" Percy is come!" whispered Lady Anne, averting her eyes from the overcoming agony of Percy's look, while with an exclamation of horror he rushed forward to clasp the poor victim in his arms.

" Oh! " Oh ! who has done this ?" exclaimed he, dreading to be told that it was the hand of revenge.

" A mad person," replied Lady Anne, " who is in custody; but more of that hereafter. She would not be moved or examined till you came, and Oh! the time has been very long!!"

" Let Percy carry me," faltered out Lady Jane; and his scalding tears fell on her bosom, while he bore her in his trembling arms to her own apartment. Lady Jane was right; the motion, slight as it was, made the

blood gush out afresh, and she fainted before she was laid on the bed. By this time two of the first surgeons in London were arrived, whom Lady Anne had sent for; and having cut away her dress, the wound was examined. It was deep, but they hoped not mortal; yet there was .great danger to be apprehended, hended, danger of a mortification. Meanwhile Lady Jane had recovered from her swoon, but her countenance wore the settled habit of despair; and Percy, unable to bear the scene, left the room for a while. It then occurred to him that it was right he should interrogate the murderer ; and though Jennings violently opposed his doing it, he was resolved, and went into the room below. " A woman !" exclaimed he, averting his head with agony from the being who had perhaps murdered his wife: " What, poor wretch! could lead you to such a crime?"

" She is mad, dear sir," said Jennings eagerly.

" Yes,—I am mad," replied she, " but then who made me so ? My Lady Percy!"

Percy started, but said, ″ Go on—who are you ?"

" I am nobody now, and have nothing;

' but

but I was once Walters the flower-maker's happy wife;—for he was the best of husbands." ;. ..:>. , , .

" And where is he?" asked Percy.

" In heaven, I hope, though he did cut his throat rather than go to prison, because my Lady Percy would not pay him, and so he ran in debt!"

Here, if Jennings had not supported him, Percy would have fallen on the ground, and the woman went on, for he

could not interrupt her. " Well,—I

saw him die ;—and for two months I was, I fancy, dead too,—but I came to life again, and went home,—to a home without Walters: but as soon as I got settled, he appeared to me; but I won't tell what he said, though I did as he bade me, —and that very night amongst some rubbish I found the very knife he used to kill himself. Oh ! says I, this is what he meant:—so I hid it in my bosom, for I

knew a use for it,—and I did as Walters bade me, and 1 revenged him> for I have killed Lady Percy."

Percy could bear no more, and was rushing out of the room;—but making a great effort, he turned back, saying, " See that she is kindly and humanely treated, for the poor creature is certainly insane." -—True ; but he felt only too bitterly that she had " method in her madness," and he Well recollected giving Lady Jane money to pay Walters a flower.man.

The poor woman had, on her return home, found by accident the knife her husband had used in his suicide; and the sight of it having overset her reason again, her bewildered brain had fancied she saw Walters, and that he told her to kill Lady Jane, and with that same weapon.

It was certainly with increased agony that Percy returned into his wife's apartment, who was now undressed, and lying

composedly composedly in her bed,—while Lady Anne, white and motionless as a statue, stood gazing on her in mournful silence.

" Let me speak to you one moment," said Percy, alarmed at her death.like appearance, and Lady Anne suffered him to lead her from the bed.—" Do you not remember the name of Walters, a flower. man, who made those beautiful roses for one of the poor soul's fetes ?"

" I do,—but 1 also know that this bill was paid, for I gave her money to pay it."

" Aye—and so did 7; but depend upon it, it was never paid!"

" No !"

*' Though the poor woman be mad, her story is but too probable!"

" No, no—I will hear no more," said Lady Anne, turning very faint, and laying her head on Lady Jane's pillow. Percy, too restless to be stationary, and auxious to know the truth, now went in

 search search of Ellis, and interrogated her so closely, that Ellis, bursting into tears, confirmed all the woman had said ; adding that, though she knew the end of the unhappy Walters, she had carefully kept it from Lady Jane, for she well knew how it would afflict her.

" Dreadful!" said Percy to himself, " what a fate is mine! for I must in justice and humanity maintain through her future existence the being w ho has deprived my wife of hers ! Yet I must do it—must, where I can, atone for the errors of the wretched Jane!"

Percy now returned to the apartment of the sufferer, but he forbore to name to Lady Anne what he saw she wished to remain ignorant of. That night Lady Jane, though she did not sleep, lay quiet and silent, except that every now and then she groaned dreadfully; and w hen Lady Anne, who never moved from her, tenderly

derly inquired whether it was pain from the wound that occasioned her to groan, she shook her head, and faintly murmured— "Pain of the mind!— Pain of the mind !" Percy meanwhile wandered from room to room, too wretched to sit still, and too anxious concerning his unhappy wife to think of endeavouring to take repose.

Early in the morning the surgeons came again, and seemed to think unfavourably of the appearance of the wound, while Lady Jane fixed her eager eyes on their face as if she would read their every thought. When they had ended their consultation, Lady Anne followed them out to ask their real opinion, and Lady Jane was therefore left alone with the physician who attended with them.— " I cannot make out entirely," said Lady Jane in a sort of whisper to him, ** who it was that thus wounded me: *V 2* do do you know, sir? for I feel that 1 should be much easier if I knew the whole truth, as then I should be spared these ever restless conjectures :" .— and the physician, not suspecting that she had a clue to Mrs. Walters's bloody deed which he had not, and feeling that anguish and restlessness in her situation must be mischievous, told her that a road woman of the name of Walters had wounded her j;a poor woman, who had gone mad in consequence of seeing her nushand cut his throat to avoid going to prison for debt. And as soon as he had said this, he saw Lady Jane. hide her face in the bed.clothes, and heard her utter groans to which he could not endure toiisten, till Lady Anne overhearing her ran into the room, with a face even of more w oe than she had when she quitted ir. As soon as the physician was gone, Lady Jane «lowly and with great efiWt told her, she found her suspicions picions true, and that it had been *blood* for *blood:*—nor could Lady Aime's declarations of ignorance on the

subject, which were literally true, at all weaken Lady Jane's horrible but just convictions.—» " Let me unburthen my mind to some one," said she. —** Shall I send for your uncle?" asked Lady Anne.—"No!" she replied, " I will see him before I die, but I will not shock his affections and wound his pride by unveiling to him the whple of his niece's delinquency." But before any clergyman could arrive a violent delirium came on, and her children whom she had wished to see were forbidden to enter.

What were not the agonies of Percy and Lady Anne, to find that the images uppermost in her mind were the selfmurdered Walters and his frantic wife! " Look! there they are!" she exclaimed. " Take them away! take them away!" p 3 while while she pathetically prayed her husband and her cousin to shield her from their wrath, and from their just retribution.

Alas ! while she was thus severely expiating the result of error, which, though not leading to intentional guilt, yet from its pernicious magnitude was as dreadful in its consequence as guilt which had been intended, the newspapers were full of loud laments for her danger, and loud execrations of her assassin. The sonneteer wrote and published verses declaring the probable extinction of such a luminary as Lady Jane Percy to be as much to be dreaded as that of the sun himself ; for that her bounty and in.. fluence, like his, diffused happiness and plenty on all around her: while relations, friends, acquaintances, and even strangers, thronged her door from night till morning with inquiries after her situation;

and and even the gayest assemblies were rendered gloomy, by the appearance *in* every corner of the room of groups evidently formed to discuss the mournful fate of the once certain dmament and delight of every scene that she honoured with her presence; and on her table at home, the eye of the unhappy and conscious husband was continually met by books, in the first page of which he read a dedication, praising Lady Jane Percy as the most exalted, most benevolent, and most spotless of her *sex;* tfll maddened by What to him appeared mockery at Such a moment, he used to dash the lying pages with indignation on the ground.

But if it was agony to them to witness Lady Jane's delirium, it was even ten-fold pain to watch beside her dying bed when delirium had subsided, when mortification had actually taken place, when

returning returning sense, and absence from pain, proclaimed her dissolution near, and she was at her own earnest desire assured that her fate was inevitable.

" And is it really so ? And must I die ?" she violently exclaimed,—" I, who am so ill prepared for death 1 I, who have wasted what all the good value and improve in vicious pleasures, and neglect of positive duties !″

"Jane, Jane! have mercy on me!" said Percy, falling on his knees beside her, and kissing her clenched hand, clenched with the agony of her soul. " Look at your poor cousin ! see how she suffers— and do not torture us thus."

"Suffers! she suffers! Why the greatest sufferings of virtue like hers, are pleasures to the pangs 1 feel from the consciousness of guilt! Do you forget," she wildly added, " that there is *blood* upon my conscience ?" .

K These

" These are the ravings of a distempered imagination, dearest Jane. Do yourself justice! Remember your virtues as well as your failings! Remember you have been a fond, faithful wife!"

" And with such a husband that was great merit, was it not ?" she said with an ironical smile.—Here she paused ; for a sudden alteration took place in her countenance, and Lady Anne's ever watchful eye read in it the approaches of death.

" Quick, quick!" cried Lady Jane, " send for my uncle !—let me—let me — have his prayers in my last moments!" And Ellis ran into the apartment below to fetch both her uncles, who in mournful silence were waiting to attend the deathbed of one who had ever been the pride and often the charm of their existence. But they arrived too late. Lady Jane again deplored her past life, her waste of

time, time> her neglect of her cousin's precepts and example, the distress she had occasioned both to her and to her husband ; when, suddenly seizing Lady Anne's hand, she exclaimed, " Pray for me! pray for me, Anne, I am dying! and Oh ! how full of dread! how full of reluctance! Yet, let me die performing one just deed." — Then putting Lady Anne's hand in that of Percy's, she joined and pressed them together, and tried to«xpress

her wishes and her meaning. But the power of utterance was gone; and pressing their united hands to her cold, clammy lipS, she seemed, as she raised her eyes to Heaven, to murmur an inward prayerj and sinking back on her pillow she expired without a groan.

END OF VOL. I.

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